3/6

Chassels

FRONTISPIECE.

P. W. Nathan del. — T. Kennedy sculp.

"At Eden's Gate he stopp'd, and now, behind us,
Terrifically waved his Flaming Sword."—
CANTO 2 line 77.

Published by Hurst & Co. at Paternoster Row June 1 1811

THE

DEATH OF ABEL;

A Poem;

IN FIVE CANTOS;

FROM THE GERMAN OF S. GESSNER;

WITH

OCCASIONAL NOTES:

DEDICATED,

BY PERMISSION,

TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

PRINCESS CHARLOTTE, OF WALES.

BY W. C. OULTON.

Of the primeval disobedient pair,
From blissful Paradise expell'd—of him,
Who fell a victim to fraternal rage,
And, to the dust he came from, first return'd,—
Strains most sublime!—I now aspire to sing.——CANTO I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HOGG AND CO., No. 16, PATERNOSTER-ROW,

By RIDER and WEED, Little Britain.

1811.

TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

PRINCESS CHARLOTTE, OF WALES,

THIS ATTEMPT TO PRODUCE

A Poem,

IN ENGLISH BLANK VERSE,

FROM THE JUSTLY-ADMIRED GERMAN WORK

OF THE

DEATH OF ABEL,

IS,

WITH A LIVELY AND GRATEFUL IMPRESSION OF THE HONOR DERIVED FROM HER LIBERAL PERMISSION,

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY HER ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

EVER DEVOTED AND

MOST OBEDIENT

HUMBLE SERVANT,

WALLEY CHAMB. OULTON.

PREFACE.

THE works of our most distinguished writers lose a considerable portion of their spirit when translated into another language, particularly those of a poetical description, which are thus reduced to plain narratives. The energetic muse of DRYDEN caused VIRGIL to live again in English, and the harmonious lays of POPE gave similar immortality to HOMER; but, it must be confessed, justice has never yet been done, in the English language, to our German author.

Mrs. COLLYER, the first who translated GESSNER'S "Death of Abel," has been, throughout, so literal, that the beauties of the original are frequently rendered disgusting tautologies in her copy: the simplicity of the poet dwindles into puerility; and the language

is so very ungrammatical, that it is surprising it could have escaped from the press, in all the successive editions, without correction.

Another translator, Mr. SHOBERL, has certainly given us a "Death of Abel" in more elegant prose; but, striving to excel, he has unfortunately made too free with his author; and has, in many instances, deviated from the original.

As this poem of GESSNER is an evident imitation of MILTON's celebrated "Paradise Lost," certainly blank verse is the only English dress in which it can appear to the best advantage. This arduous task I never should have had the vanity to attempt, had there been a prospect of its being executed by a more able pen: but, as so many years have elapsed without producing this wished-for translation, the present, which has been a work of considerable labor, is humbly submitted to the public, with the hope, that, however imperfect, the admiration which has hitherto at-

tended the "Death of Abel" in its defective prosaic state, will now be encreased; and that, consequently, it will be found the most useful translation for seminaries. The subject which our author has chosen for his work cannot fail in gratifying juvenile minds; and, being now rendered an English poem, may be the means of blending instruction with amusement. For this reason blank verse has been preferred, as the chiming of words is by no means calculated to assist reading or elocution; and, therefore, we find MILTON's *Paradise Lost* and THOMSON's *Seasons* are more studied in English seminaries than POPE's *Homer* or DRYDEN's *Virgil*. Besides, no work of a serious nature should ever be encumbered with the shackles of rhyme.

The notes, which are occasionally subjoined, chiefly tend to show the inconsistencies and defects of former translations, not proceeding from ill-natured or fastidious criticism, but from a natural desire that the present might not suffer by any comparison. Wherever de-

viations from the original have been unavoidable, or were deemed necessary, they are candidly acknowledged; and the remarks respecting the work itself will be found just and impartial.

CANTO THE FIRST.

ARGUMENT.

Introduction—Morning—Abel and Thirza, his wife, repair to the bower—Thirza's tender address to her husband—Abel's reply and morning-hymn—Thirza's conjugal affection and Abel's happiness—Adam and Eve draw near, and embrace Abel and Thirza—They are joined by Mahala, the wife of Cain—Her dejection—Cain's soliloquy of indignation—He is overheard by his relatives in the bower—Their consequent anxiety—Abel's determination to follow and sooth his brother—Adam resolves to exert the authority of a father, and goes himself to expostulate with Cain—Meeting of the father and his first-born—Cain's reproaches and obduracy—Adam's exhortations and anguish—Sudden repentance of the former—On their return to the bower, they are met by Eve, Abel, Mahala, and Thirza—Reconciliation of the brothers—Consequent delight of the parents—Mahala and Thirza prepare a banquet on the joyful occasion.

THE

DEATH OF ABEL.

CANTO I.

Of the primeval disobedient pair,
From blissful Paradise expell'd—of him,
Who fell a victim to fraternal rage,
And, to the dust he came from, first return'd,—
Strains most sublime!—I now aspire to sing. 5
Henceforth in silence rest, soft rustic pipe,
No more I seek thy aid, no longer chant
The sweet simplicity and manners mild
Of rural life—Mine be a loftier muse.
Assist, thou, who th' enraptur'd poet's mind 10
Inspir'st, when in the silent hour of night
In tranquil solitude he ruminates;

l. 4.—"For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Genesis, ch. iii. v. 19.

Preferring or the distant grove's retreat,
Or shadow'd banks of the sequester'd stream,
While the pale moon a gentle radiance spreads: 15
When, with enthusiastic fervor fill'd,
Imagination on bold wing ascends,
And to the regions of created nature
Undauntedly her flight she takes, nor stops
Till Possibility's remoter realms 20
She penetrates; where she collects rich stores
Of all that's marvellous—of all that's lovely!
Returning then, thus loaded, to erect
Her motley structure, Reason interferes:
With mild authority she claims her right 25
T' inspect the work, and, harmony her plan,
Approves, rejects, and cautiously combines.
Swift fly the hours of this sublime enjoyment—
The golden hours devoted to the task!
What! tho' he 'has labor'd from the cricket's song 30
E'en till the rising of the morning star,
Yet ample compensation must be his,
Who sentiments of piety excites
In hearts with sensibility endued;
Who boasts the approbation of all those, 35
Whose taste refin'd is charm'd with what is good:
Yes! blest the man, who is by Heav'n inspir'd

T' assist the cause of innocence and virtue!
His urn, clasp'd by the aged ivy round,
Succeeding ages justly will revere: 40
His name shall live for ever, and his fame
With never-fading verdure always bloom;
While the vain trophies of the haughty conqueror
Shall moulder into dust, and perish; while
The proud mausoleum of th' inglorious prince 45
Shall wide be scatter'd, and its moss-clad ruins,
'Midst the wild bushes of a desert, serve
The way-lost trav'ller as a place of rest.
Tho' few we find, yes, very few, indeed,
By nature gifted for the Muses' service, 50
How laudable those few to emulate!
Be then my hours, my solitary walks,
To this commendable attempt devoted!

l. 44 to 48.—This passage is translated variously by Mrs. Collyer and Mr. Shoberl. The former renders it "And the superb mausoleum of the tyrant shall stand unknown in the midst of a desert, *where human feet have made no path.*"—But Mr. Shoberl translates it thus, "When the splendid mausoleum of the inglorious monarch is scattered amidst the wild bushes of the desert, and its moss-covered ruins *serve only to afford an occasional resting-place to the way-lost wanderer,*" which is certainly preferable to Mrs. Collyer's. It is not improbable but these translators had *different* editions of Gessner's Works, as not only in this but in several other passages they vary.

Now, by the silent hours of rest led on,
The rosy goddess of the dawn dispell'd 55
The vapours, which had moisten'd the dark earth.
Anon, bright Phebus, darting his first beams
Behind the shady cedars of the mountain,
With radiant purple ting'd the floating clouds:
When Abel, and fair Thirza, his belov'd, 60
Quitted their leafy couch, and hand in hand
Both to a neighb'ring bow'r repair'd, compos'd
Of jessamines and roses interwoven.
In the blue eyes of Thirza mildly beam'd
Sweet innocence and tender love; from these 65
Her blooming cheeks a thousand charms deriv'd,
While her light tresses, which in ringlets flow'd
O'er her white neck, and carelessly fell down
Her back, a slender beauteous form display'd.
Thus walk'd she by the side of her dear Abel, 70
Whose elevated brow was thickly shaded
By his brown locks, that play'd upon his shoulders:
Serene his countenance, which yet bespoke
An air of dignity and contemplation.
Such was his manly beauty, that he seem'd 75
One of those messengers, by Heav'n commission'd
To whisper peace to the expiring sinner;

l. 55.—The rosy goddess of the dawn—Aurora.

Or, to the prayer of the sequester'd saint,
Convey a joyful answer; who, tho' seen
In human form, yet, thro' the veil assum'd, 80
Such heav'nly grace, such heav'nly beauty shine,
That in the man—the angel stands confest.

Thirza beheld him with a smile of love,
And thus her husband tenderly address'd:—
"O Abel, my belov'd, now, while the birds 85
With cheerful notes hail the return of morn,
Sing, I entreat thee, that delightful hymn,
Which yesterday thou chantedst in the mead.
How rapturous it is to praise the Lord!
My heart with holy transport is inspir'd, 90
When thy melodious lips so well express
Those sweet sensations I can only feel."

He clasp'd her to his breast, and thus replied—
"Ev'ry request my Thirza's pleas'd to make
Most readily I'll grant; with ev'ry wish, 95
Which, in her lovely eyes, I chance to read,
It shall be my chief pleasure to comply."

Then, in the fragrant bow'r, th' entrance to which
Was gilded by the morning-star, elate,

Beside each other, seated they themselves, 100
When Abel thus his Morning-Hymn began:

"Retire, O sleep, from ev'ry eye—Away
Delusive visions!—Reason now her throne
Again resumes, again illumes the mind,
As doth the Morning Sun the fertile earth. 105
Hail, glorious luminary, thou, who dartest
Such rays of glory from behind the cedars!
To ev'ry charm thou giv'st a new-born grace,
And nature's deck'd with renovated splendor!
Retire, O sleep, from ev'ry eye—away 110
Delusive visions to the shades of night!
The shades of night!—Say, where are now those shades?
Fled to the caverns of the rock—yes, fled
To the recesses of the grove; or there,
Or in th' umbrageous bower they await us, 115
And, midst the overcoming heat of noon,
Yield a refreshing salutary coolness!
See, Oh! see, where the early morning-beams
Awake the eagle—see what exhalations,
Arising from the distant mountain's brow, 120
Or from the glittering summit of the rock,
Ascend, and mix with the pure atmosphere,
Like incense of burnt off'rings from the altar!

R.W. Satchwell del. T. Kennerley sculp.

"Retire O sleep, from every eye — Away
Delusive visions!" —

CANTO I. line 102.

Published by Hogg & Co 16 Paternoster Row.

Oh! it is Nature, which thus celebrates
Returning light, and thus to Nature's God 125
The sacrifice of grateful homage pays!
Yes! praise him, O all things existing, laud
Th' Omnipotence by which you were produc'd—
Th' Omniscience too by which you're still preserv'd!
The op'ning flow'rs diffuse their early odours 130
In praise of Him, who cloth'd them with such charms;
Th' innumerable songsters of the grove,
Now perch'd upon the branches of the trees,
Or skimming with extended wings the air,
Pour forth to Heav'n their grateful melody, 135
In praise of Him who tuned their little throats.
The king of beasts—the lion—quits his den,
And with loud roars expresses his delight,
Which make the very wood resound his praise!
Glorify God, my soul, adore the Lord, 140
Who has created, and preserves us all!
Let man's thanksgivings reach his sacred throne
In preference to all his other creatures:
Yes! while they're lull'd to rest, let him awake,
And, ere the little warblers' notes are heard 145
From or the branches or the waving spray,
Let him spontaneous adoration offer!
Oh, may my solitary song ascend

Ere morning's dawn—Oh may I thus awaken
Reanimated nature to his praise! 150
Magnificent thy works, O thou most High!
To us, unworthy sinners, they display
Amazing wisdom and transcendent goodness!
Whene'er I turn me in this world of beauty,
My senses feel such exquisite delight, 155
They to my ravish'd soul convey thy bounty!
Fain wou'd I, poor weak mortal as I am,
God of benevolence! thy praise attempt:
But who can utter all thy mercies?—What
Induc'd thee—ever happy in thyself— 160
To quit that sacred silence, which around
Thy throne prevail'd; from nothing to call forth
Creation; from the bosom of dark night
To order this immeasurable world?—
It was thy boundless goodness!—What induc'd thee, 165
Thou self-existent, out of the mere dust
To form the creature Man, and in his nostrils
To breathe the breath of life?—Infinite love!—

l. 150, &c.—This Hymn is composed of several passages in the Psalms, particularly—

"All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee: they shall sing to thy name."—"Come and see the works of God:"—"He ruleth by his power for ever." Ps. lxvi.—"Sing unto God, sing praises to his name; extol him that rideth upon the Heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him." Ps. lxviii. See also Psalms xcii, xcv, xcvi, xcvii, xcviii, civ, &c. &c.

Thou gavs't him life—to give him happiness.
Art thou not, smiling morn! a lively image 170
Of the Creation? At his nod, the sun
Goes forth to chase the shades of night; all nature
In renovated beauty shines! Methinks
Such was the day, when the Creator saw
That all was very good! Such was the day, 175
When that deep silence, which had erst pervaded
The uninhabited expanse, gave way
To his commanding voice. He spake the word—
The teeming earth obey'd; and, at his *fiat*,
Myriads of beings sport about the air, 180
Of diff'rent form and hue: they soar aloft
On variegated wings, and with their notes
They make the air, th' astonish'd groves, resound
With the Creator's praise. Again he spake—
Again the earth obey'd, and animals 185
Of ev'ry kind into existence rise.
The shapeless clod now bursting into life
Innumerable forms assumes: the horse
Bounds o'er the verdant turf from which he sprang,
And neighing shakes his flowing mane for joy! 190
The bold majestic lion, scarce releas'd
From the rude cumbrous mass that gave him birth,

l. 178 to 186.—See Gen. i. v. 3 to 25.

And all impatient to throw off the load,
For the first time makes his terrific noise!
A hill now heaves with life—it moves!—it bursts! 195
And thence th' unweildy elephant stalks forth!
Thus were a thousand voices heard at once,
And different hallelujahs rent the air.
And thus, each morning, God, thou callest forth
Thy creatures from the impotence of sleep, 200
Which non-existence strongly represents.
When they awake, and when they look around,
They must behold the richness of thy bounties,
And in a general chorus sing thy praise!
The time will come, when with the sons of man 205
All the whole earth shall be inhabited:
Then shall thy praise from ev'ry part resound;
Then shall thy altars blaze on ev'ry hill;
Then from the rising to the setting day
Shall Man adore thy wondrous works, O God!" 210

Thus sang the righteous Abel, by the side
Of his belov'd, who listen'd with such joy,
That, tho' he ceas'd, his strains dwelt on her ear.
Then, gazing on him with much tenderness,
Around his neck her snowy arms she threw, 215
And thus exulting cried—" O my dear husband,

How has the music of thy lips inspir'd
My soul, and fill'd her with sublime devotion!
Not only doth thy tender care protect
My feebler frame; but, under thy direction, 220
My very soul is elevated. When,
Amid th' obscurity of doubt and darkness,
Sh' has lost her way, when she becomes depress'd
With holy fear, thou art her guide—her friend;
Thy wisdom solaces, dispels the gloom, 225
And silent apprehension thus becomes
Pure adoration. Oft, ah! very oft,
To tell the truth, each moment I'm alone,
With tears of gratitude return I thanks
To God most High, for having form'd us both 230
To bless each other—for that unity
In all the thoughts—the wishes of our hearts."

As thus she spake, pure conjugal affection
To ev'ry tone, to ev'ry gesture, gave
A sweetness, which no language can describe. 235
Tho' Abel answer'd not, his soften'd look—
The tear which glisten'd in his eye—the fervor
With which he press'd her to his throbbing bosom—
All—all, unutterable love express'd.

How happy then was man—how pure his joy, 240
When those refreshments, which afforded strength,
Were all he of the fruitful earth requir'd;
When, with a competency satisfied,
Virtue and health were all he ask'd of Heav'n!
No restless discontent created then 245
Insatiable desires; no luxury,
Inventive of innumerable wants,
Chang'd happiness to splendid misery:
Mutual love then form'd the nuptial tie.
No penury, no want of lands or gold, 250
Prevented then the conjugal embrace:
No false ambition, no paternal pride,
Divided then the loving twain—oppos'd
The lover's wish—the tender maiden's hope,
Whom Heav'n to bless each other form'd, and left them
In fruitless sorrow to consume their days—
These cares, O Vanity, belong to thee!

While thus this happy couple were engag'd,
Adam and Eve drew near: with secret pleasure
They Abel's morning hymn had overheard, 260
And all the fond effusions of his wife:
Such happiness and virtue could not fail

In yielding them ineffable delight:
Their hearts expanded with parental love;
A lively joy glow'd on their cheeks, and now 265
With tenderness their children they embrac'd.

The wife of Cain, Mahala, who had been
Another witness of the scene that pass'd,
(For she her mother at a distance follow'd,)
Now in the bow'r her relatives approach'd. 270
Tho' pure her mind, from baneful envy free,
Yet Cain's impetuous disposition had
In her appearance wrought a wondrous change.
For on her countenance dejection sat;
In her black eyes soft melancholy reign'd; 275
While poignant grief, that preys upon the heart,
Dispell'd the bloom from her now pallid cheek,
Which her dark ringlets fain wou'd have conceal'd.
When the transported Thirza had express'd
Her joy—her unfeign'd gratitude to Heav'n, 280
For having giv'n her such a worthy man,
Mahala, who, without the bow'r, had mark'd
Their mutual endearments, cou'd n't refrain
From sad reflection; and with Thirza's lot
Her own comparing, tears her eyes bedew'd. 285
But soon she wip'd away the pearly drops,

And, entering with a friendly smile the harbour,
Saluted cordially the happy twain.

Not so her husband—he was passing by
The fragrant bow'r—he likewise had o'erheard 290
The morning-hymn—his parents had beheld
Embracing tenderly their fav'rite boy.
Malignant envy at the sight wax'd warm,
And in his heart fix'd her envenom'd sting.

"So, so," he cried with an indignant look, 295
"These are fine raptures, sweet caresses these!—
Aye, he may well compose his hymns and sing;
Else, idle youth! he'd sleep away his time,
When by his flock reclining in the shade!

l. 290, &c.—The poet does not seem to have introduced his characters with much skill. Adam and Eve, we find, were listening to Abel's song, and Thirza's fond effusions. Mahala (Cain's wife) had overheard and seen all that had passed; and Cain, in like manner, was another secret spectator We must suppose there were several *private* ways to the bower, as Adam and Eve, Mahala and Cain, were certainly listening at the same time, for they all overheard the hymn. To add to the improbability, the company in the bower overhear Cain's soliloquy (*l.* 320). How much better it would have been had the poet, on some pretence, made Cain enter the bower abruptly, and witness the parental embrace. He could then have expressed his indignation, and given vent to his envy. Adam and Cain's reconciliation, at the end of this Canto, is in like manner overheard (*l.* 673.); but, as Eve, Abel, &c., had been apprised of Cain's unkindness, it is natural that their curiosity should have been then excited.

I, at my rugged toil, must daily bear 300
The scorching sun; I have no leisure then,
No inclination, for this melody;
For I must turn the glebe, must daily break
The stubborn earth, curs'd for my father's sin
With barrenness; and, these exertions o'er, 305
Well my exhausted limbs may seek repose,
That I next morn my labor may resume;
Yet am I ever tenderly embrac'd?
No, but this boy, this indolent soft youth,
Who'd faint away beneath th' oppressive weight 310
Of all my toils—who, did he, but one day,
Endure the hardships I am doom'd to bear,
Wou'd never sing again—he is receiv'd
With open arms—with melting tears of joy!—
Well, flow these joyful tears, with all my heart, 315
And be the fond embrace again renew'd:
I hate this childish love.—No matter tho'
Whate'er I hate, so that fair youth be pleas'd."

This said, with hasty steps, Cain to his field
Pass'd on; but in the bow'r his words were heard, 320
And the disquietude he had express'd
Now fill'd his relatives with deep concern.
Mahala's pallid cheeks were doubly blanch'd;

She fell on Thirza's neck, and wept aloud;
While Eve, reclining on her husband, mourn'd 325
Th' invet'racy which her first-born evinc'd.

"Beloved parents," Abel cried, "forbear,
My brother I will follow to the field;
I will embrace him, yes, embrace him close,
And say all that fraternal love can dictate: 330
He shall not leave my arms till he declare
His rage subsides; till he declare he loves me!
Alas! I have examin'd all my thoughts,
Devising means for gaining his affection;
Ev'ry endearing method have I tried 335
To sooth, to temper him. Sometimes, indeed,
I've touch'd his very heart—sometimes anew
Enkindled the expiring sparks of love.
But, ah! as oft the gloom of discontent
Return'd, as oft extinguish'd the bright flame." 340

"Dear Abel," the dejected father cried,
"Thy brother I myself will seek, and all
That reason and paternal love can urge
I'll say, his obduracy to remove:
He surely will not, when my grief he sees, 345
A father's sway and tenderness resist.

O Cain! O my first-born, how hast thou fill'd
With agonizing care my tortur'd heart!
Good Heav'n! Can the tyrannic passions rage
With so much violence in sinners' breasts, 350
As to extinguish ev'ry worthy spark
Of virtue and benevolence? O sin,
Tremendous sin! what dreadful ravages
Committest thou on ev'ry human soul!
Wretch that I am, I tremble when I think! 355
What dark forebodings terrify my mind
When I look forward, and foresee the fate—
The miseries, of my unhappy offspring!"

Thus Adam, o'er whose venerable brow
Dejection hung.—He left the bow'r with speed, 360
And to the field of his first-born repair'd.

On the old man's approach, Cain, from his toil
Desisted, and address'd his father thus:—

"What means this sternness? In thy angry eyes
I read reproach: with such a countenance 365
Thou didst not take my brother to thy arms!"

In accents then of mingled grief and pity,
The sage replied—"Be comforted, my son!

Wert thou not conscious thou deserv'st reproach,
Thou cou'dst not in my eyes have read displeasure. 370
Yes, Cain, reproaches are thy due; the anguish—
The bitter anguish, which thy cruel spleen
Has in this breast implanted, brings me here."

"Then 'tis not love," cried Cain; "that tender passion
Must for my gentle brother be reserv'd." 375

"Yes, love," resum'd the sage, "'tis likewise love;
For Heav'n's my witness that I love thee, Cain.
These tears—this sorrow—this incessant care
Which torture me—nay, her who gave thee birth
With so much pain—these melancholy days, 380
So render'd by solicitude for thee—
These restless nights—for thou art the sole cause
Of our nocturnal sighs—what are all these,
But the effects of the most tender love?
O Cain! my son! my son! didst thou love us 385
As we love thee, 'twou'd be thy anxious care
To dry the tears of anguish from our cheeks;
To banish from the mind that cloud of grief,
Which darkens and embitters all our days!
Alas! alas! if yet thy heart retain 390
A just regard for the Almighty, who

Th' inmost recesses of thy soul can search—
If in thy callous breast there yet exist
One spark of filial love—by that regard,
And by that love, I now conjure thee, Cain, 395
Restore to us our lost tranquillity;
Restore, my son, all our extinguish'd joy;
No longer cherish this vindictive ire,
This base invet'racy against thy brother—
A brother, who sincerely loves—whose heart 400
Now beats for an embrace—whose cordial wish
Is from thy bosom to eradicate
Those tares of discontent—those noxious weeds
With which, at present, it is overrun.
Thou, Cain, wast my first-born; thou, of my strength
Wast the beginning: when thy infant eyes 406
First open'd to the light, and gaz'd with joy,
Mine gaz'd with all the transport of a father.
Why shou'd disquietude then vex thy soul—
Why shou'd thy heart with jealousy be pain'd, 410
Because I in thy brother too rejoice?
Oh! can the tears of joy, the raptu'rous bliss
Which his exalted piety excites,
Provoke such discontent and ruthless hate!
The angels, who surround us, with delight 415
Mark ev'ry virtuous action. God himself,

The everlasting God, from his high throne
With gracious approbation condescends
To look down on th' oblations of the just.
What! wou'dst thou change th' unalterable nature 420
Of purity and beauty?—Be assur'd,
It is not in thy pow'r, and, if it were,
O Cain, cou'd we obdurately resist
Those sweet sensations—those delightful thoughts,
Which they create in the enraptur'd soul? 425
The rolling thunder, or the midnight storm,
Calls forth no gentle smile upon the cheek;
Nor can the rude ungovernable passions
Be ever found to tranquillize the mind."

Thus Cain austerely answer'd—"Is reproach 430
All from a father's lips I'm doom'd to hear?
What! if I cannot dress my face with smiles,
Nor tears of tenderness at pleasure bid
T' o'erflow my eyes, shall my more solemn cast
Be branded with the odious name of Vice? 435
Mine is a nobler choice—severer toils,
And bolder enterprise are my delight:
That manliness, which on my brow is stamp'd,
And which by Nature's hand is there imprinted,
I cannot to effem'nacy convert— 440

Soft smiles, and gentle tears!—Can the bold eagle,
That soars on high, coo like the timid dove?"

With gravity majestic Adam said,
"Wilt thou deceive thyself, and harbour still
Those baleful passions which thou shou'dst subdue, 445
And which, if not subdu'd, must make thee wretched?
No, no, my son, it is not manliness
That on thy brow is stamp'd; thy countenance,
Thy agitation, nay, thy looks, bespeak
Malignant envy and sore discontent: 450
These spread a cloud which darkens all thy prospects,
And leaves thee in a gloomy hopeless state:
Hence, thy incessant murmurs during toil—
Hence, thy disquietude—thy cold behaviour—
Thy want of kindness and philanthropy. 455
Tell thy fond father, what will give thee ease;
Oh, cou'd we banish this despondency,
And render all thy future days serene
As is the vernal morn; then, O my son!
Wou'd our most ardent wish be gratified. 460
But, Cain, what cause hast thou to be uneasy?
Lo! do not the surrounding springs of bliss
Invite thee?—Doth not free indulgent Nature
Throw open all her charms?—Whatever's good,

Whatever's lovely and delectable, 465
Which piety and reason can bestow,
Is it not thine, my son, as well as ours?
But, ah! thou leav'st untasted, unenjoy'd,
Those blessings; yet complain'st of wretchedness?
Does then that portion of tranquillity, 470
Which Everlasting Goodness has conferr'd
On sinful man, produce this discontent?
What! is not ev'ry blessing in that portion
A gift from Heav'n—a mercy undeserv'd?
Dost envy the more happy lot of angels? 475
Know, then, the very angels have evinc'd
A disposition similar to thine:
Aspiring to be Gods, from Heav'n they fell!
Wou'dst thou arraign th' Omnipotent's decrees,
Who with consummate mercy condescends 480
On his unworthy creatures to look down;
And, while all nature lauds his holy name,
Shall guilty man, a worm, sprung from the dust,
Presume to raise his head, and call in question
The dispensations of that Providence, 485
Whose nod the wide expanse of Heav'n obeys;

l. 478.—A similar idea we read in Pope.

" Aspiring to be angels, men rebel;
" Aspiring to be Gods, the angels fell."

Whose bounty the whole universe attests;
To whose all-seeing eye, futurity
Is as to-day, and whose unerring wisdom
Can cause from evil good to be produc'd? 490
Be then, my son, serene, as thou wast wont;
Dispel this gloom, and let not discontent
O'ercloud each cheerful prospect, and conceal
Each source of bliss: with mild complacency
Behold the pleasures Nature now displays; 495
Be still alive to social love, to all
The blessings of this life.—Enjoy them, Cain,
And, by enjoying them, be happy still!"

"Alas! what need of all these admonitions?"
With sullen indignation, Cain replied. 500
"Oh, were my heart at ease, then ev'ry thing,
I know, would smile, and add to my delight;
But, say, can I command the storm to cease,
Or the impetuous torrent to forbear?
No! no! I'm born of woman, and am doom'd 505
To mis'ry from my birth! On the first-born—
On my devoted head—so pleas'd it Heav'n—
The cup of malediction has been pour'd!
Then not for me Nature unfolds her charms;

Those streams of bliss and pleasure, which may yield
Reviving draughts to you, flow not for me!" 511

"Ah, Cain," cried Adam, in a falt'ring voice,
For tears and strong emotions near suppress'd it;
"Too true, indeed; on all, of woman born,
Has fall'n Heav'n's malediction; yes, on all! 515
Why, my beloved son, then, shou'dst thou think
That God a greater portion of his wrath
Has pour'd on thee, our first-born, than on us,
The first transgressors? No, this cannot be;
Such partiality could not proceed 520
From him, who is superlatively good.
No, Cain! thou wast not doom'd to misery;
God never call'd into existence man
To render him unhappy: he, indeed,
May, by imprudence, make himself a wretch, 525
If, spite of reason, he neglect t'enjoy
The true felicity which lies before him—
If he give way to his unruly passions,
And blessings into curses thus convert,
He then embitters all his future days. 530
No, thou canst not command the storm to cease,
Nor the impetuous torrent to forbear;

But thou mayst call forth Reason to dispel
The clouds of discontent that overshadow thee;
Yes, she can calm the tumult in thy breast; 535
Attend then to her voice, and o'er thyself
Obtain, my son, a noble victory,
And be thy sentiments henceforth refin'd,
Then all vain wishes, all impure desires,
Like vapours 'fore the rising sun, will vanish! 540
Ah! Cain, there was a time, when I have seen
The tears of rapture stealing down thy cheek;
When, to the ways of rectitude attach'd,
The gratifying whispers of thy conscience
Had rais'd throughout thy frame a glow of joy! 545
Oh, tell me, was not that true happiness?
Say, was not then thy soul serene—serene
As the unspotted, the unclouded, sun?
Then, my dear son, my still belov'd, let Reason—
That emanation of the deity!— 550
Resume her seat: let her direct thy steps,
And her companion, Virtue, will attend
To give thee ease—to purify thy heart,
And lead to permanent felicity.
Oh! listen to a father's admonitions: 555
Go, seek thy brother—the first duty this,
That Reason recommends;—yes, seek thy brother;

Receive him to thy arms. Ah! with what joy
He'll fly to meet thee, Cain; with what delight—
What tenderness, return each fond embrace!" 560

"Well, well," said Cain, "I will embrace the boy;
Anon I'll meet him, when, at sultry noon,
To take my wonted rest, I leave the field;
For labor now requires my special care:
Yes, father, be assur'd, as 'tis thy wish, 565
I will anon embrace my brother Abel;
But never, never shall my firmer soul
To that effem'nate weakness be dissolv'd,
Which so endears to thee the tender youth,
And makes thy eyes run o'er with tears of rapture. 570
Was't not such weakness, such false tenderness,
Brought down the curse of Heav'n on all mankind;
When thou in happy Paradise wast plac'd,
Till yielding to a woman's tears——but hold—
It is not fit I should reproach a father: 575
No, no, I reverence thee, and am silent."
This having said, he to his toil return'd.

Now motionless stood Adam; tears of anguish
Stream'd from his eyes; his hands to Heav'n were rais'd;
While, in a tone of deep distress, he cried, 580

" O Cain, thou 'hast cut me to the very heart;
But they are just reproaches—I deserve them;
And yet methinks thou shou'dst have spar'd a father,—
Thou shou'dst have spar'd at least this heavy charge;
Which, like a peal of thunder, shakes my soul! 585
'Tis thus, O horrible presentiment!
'Tis thus, all my descendents, when immers'd
In guilt, and by its punishments o'ertaken,
Will trample on my dust, and vent their curses
'Gainst him, who first brought sin into the world." 590

This said, the wretched Adam, with his eyes
Fix'd on the earth, now pensively withdrew:
His hands in speechless agony he wrang:
At length the groans, which from his tortur'd heart
Escap'd, struck with remorse his guilty son; 595
Yes, with concern the pertinaceous Cain
Beheld a father's anguish, and exclaim'd—

" Alas! he wrings his hands—he sobs—he weeps!
I have reproach'd him—bitterly reproach'd
A fond indulgent parent—what a wretch! 600
I am the author of this keen distress—
Oh, I am mad—Hell rages in my breast;
And, like a whirlwind, I destroy the peace

Of all around me!—Hark! I hear his groans!
Methinks I see his hands stretch'd out to Heav'n! 605
Perhaps, vile as I am, he prays for me;—
I cannot pray; no, no, I am a monster,
Fit only 'mong the savage beasts to dwell
That in the desert prowl; and not with man
Associate. See! how pensively he walks; 610
While still his sighs assail my ears.—Ah me!
Shall I pursue—shall I embrace his knees—
And supplicate forgiveness?—By all means.
Yes, it is plain, my misery proceeds
Not from external causes: in my own 615
Unguarded heart, all those black clouds arise,
Which dissipate, like tempests, ev'ry joy.
Return then, Reason, Virtue.—Oh, return,
And calm the tumult which distracts my mind;
Extinguish quick this burning hell within me! 620
Ah, there he is! quite motionless and spent,
He stands—while his uplifted hands announce
The attitude of pray'r! Alas! my father!—
Yes, I will haste, fall prostrate at his feet,
Wretch that I am—Oh my rebellious heart!" 625

With speed he sought his father: the old man
He found exhausted, leaning 'gainst a tree;

While on the ground his eyes, still full of tears,
Immoveably were fix'd. This piteous sight
Affected ev'n the stubborn heart of Cain, 630
Who instantaneously fell to the earth,
And clasp'd his father's knees; then, looking up,
He wept, (now not asham'd to weep,) and said,
" Forgive me, father, tho' I am not worthy
To call thee by that tender name.—Ah, no! 635
Thou well mayst cast me with abhorrence from thee,
For I deserve it—I abhor myself!
But see, oh! see me prostrate at thy feet;
Behold my anguish—mark, alas! my tears,
And then forgive me.—I, wretch that I am! 640
Resisted all thy tender admonitions
With sullen pride: but, when I heard thee groan,
Oh! when I saw thee wring thy hands with grief,
My heart began to melt—a beam from Heav'n
Recall'd and rous'd me from my apathy. 645
Now, with deep sorrow and unfeign'd contrition,
I own my sin and my unworthiness:
Reject not then these penitential tears

l. 633 and 649.—The parentheses here introduced are deviations from the original; for, as Cain, in preceding passages, (*l.* 315, 316, 317—433, 434—440, 441—567 to 574,) derides the idea of shedding tears, and of being affected by them, some notice should certainly be taken of his thus suddenly weeping himself.

(The tears of thy first-born). The worst of passions
Had ta'en, I own, possession of my soul: 650
But I repent, dear father, I repent;
Yes, I implore forgiveness of my God—
Of thee—of Abel—and of all our friends."

"Rise, my belov'd;" th' astonish'd father cried,
And in a transport press'd him to his heart; 655
"O, my dear son, th' Almighty Governor,
Who in th' Heav'ns dwells, most graciously beholds
These thy repentant tears. Come to my arms,
And let endearments tell thee I forgive.
How hast thou chang'd a father's grief to joy! 660
Blest time! in which my son, my dear first-born,
Restores to us tranquillity and peace:
O blissful hour, in which he now returns
With cordiality each fond embrace.
Alas! excess of joy has made me faint— 665
Support me, Cain—Oh! let us seek thy brother;
Let me behold your mutual endearments,
And then my happiness will be complete."

They now proceeded toward the pasture; Cain,
With filial piety, supporting Adam: 670
But, on their way, lo! Abel, whom they sought,

And with him Eve, his mother, and his sisters,
Approach'd them in the grove. Behind a thicket
They, unperceiv'd, had witness'd the late scene:
For they had follow'd Adam at a distance, 675
Seen his emotions, and his son's contrition.
With open arms ran Abel to his brother:
He press'd him to his heart—again he press'd—
Then wept aloud; for, by his tears alone,
Cou'd he express the raptures which he felt. 680
At length he cried—"And dost thou love me, Cain?
Let me but hear, dear brother, from thy lips,
This tender declaration, and I'm blest."—

"Yes, I do love thee, most sincerely love thee,"
Cain answer'd; and, repeating the embrace, 685
Confirm'd his words. "Canst thou forgive me, then?
Canst thou forgive my anger—my unkindness,
Which have so long disturb'd thy peace?—Oh! Abel,
Canst thou, alas! forgive that discontent
Which tended to disquiet thee, and all: 690
I was unhappy too—a wretch, indeed;
Till reason, like a vivid flash from Heav'n,
Broke thro' the gloom, transfix'd my very soul,
And still'd the furious tempest: now the weeds,

l. 673.—See note on *l.* 290.

Which had so long oppos'd the seeds of virtue, 695
Are all eradicated from my breast.
Forgive—and never may the memory
Of what is past disturb our future bliss!"

"Never—Oh! never," happy Abel cried,
Still pressing Cain more closely to his heart. 700
"Be all the past now in oblivion buried;
For who wou'd not forget the transient pain
Of a fallacious dream, when, in the morn,
To joy we 'wake, and rapture fills the mind?
Oh! my dear brother, words cannot express 705
E'en half the transport that I feel—let tears
Supply their place—for I can only weep—
Can only press thee to my throbbing heart."

The mother, who, with tears of joy, beheld
Her sons lock'd in each other's arms, exclaim'd— 710
"O, my beloved children, my dear Cain,
Never, since first I heard thy infant lips
The tender name of mother lisp—Oh! never
Felt I such rapturous sensations!—Ah!
How great a load of sorrow had oppress'd 715
My soul; but she is happily releas'd,
And exquisite delight pervades her now!

No longer shall my heart be torn with feuds;
For amity and peace again return
To those whom I have nourish'd at my breast. 720
I'm like a fertile vine, which bears sweet grapes,
And by the thirsty passenger is blest
For its delicious fruit.—So you, my children,
My re-united sons, whom I have borne,
Will draw down blessings on a mother's head, 725
For being instrumental to such bliss.
Come to my arms—Oh! let me kiss away
Those precious tears with which fraternal love
Your cheeks hath moisten'd.—With what ecstacy
I share the joy that beams in ev'ry eye— 730
My sons!—My daughters!—My dear husband, too!"

This said, with inexpressible delight
She to her bosom press'd the youths.—On Adam
She cast a tender look—her lips met his—
And in her glist'ning eyes were seen united 735
Parental love and conjugal affection.
The beauteous sisters, who, though silent, shar'd
The gen'ral joy, were equally caress'd.
Cain's wife, Mahala, while vivacity
Shone in her now more lovely countenance, 740
Exclaim'd—"O, sister Thirza, let us go—

Let's pick the fairest flowers we can find
To deck our bow'r—let's strip the bending boughs
Of their best fruit, to form a rich repast.
Be this, this happy day, to harmless mirth 745
And innocent festivity devoted!"

Away the sisters flew—joy gave them wings—
Away they flew the banquet to prepare.

Now, hand in hand, the brothers led the way,
While their delighted parents, at their side, 750
Proceeded slowly towards the hill: but ere
The bow'r they 'had reach'd, the active sisters had,
With lavish hand, provided the repast:
Delicious fruits of various sorts they spread,
While fragrant flow'rs of variegated hue 755
Not only serv'd to decorate the scene,
But, by their brilliant tints and grateful odours,
To cheer the eye and charm the scent combin'd.
How plentiful, how elegant the feast!
But 'twas the elegance of nature.—Here 760
No pois'nous dishes in rich guise were plac'd,
To pamper guests, and feed them—for the grave.

l. 760-1-2.—These lines are omitted in Shoberl's translation, without any cause assigned. They are thus translated by Mrs. Collyer:—

Now seated to their temp'rate noon-tide feast,
On ev'ry smiling face contentment sat,
In ev'ry eye beam'd sweet complacency. 765
With social converse and unmix'd delight
Th' unheeded hours pass'd rapidly away;
Till, by the flight of time, mild ev'ning came.

"No darts of death, hid in rich sauces, struck with inhospitable blow the unthinking guest."

As the scene changes in this part, and, as the Second Canto includes the conversation which then took place, perhaps it would have been better had the First Canto concluded at *l.* 748.

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

CANTO THE SECOND.

ARGUMENT.

Conversation in the bower—Abel solicits his father to relate his adventures, when he first became an inhabitant of the earth—Adam applies to Eve for the commencement of the narrative—She begins the history—Their anguish on their expulsion from Paradise—Eve's self-reproaches and Adam's consolatory advice—They reach a grove of poplars—Eve concludes, and Adam continues the story—He provides a temporary lodging in a cave—Remarks on the enmity of beasts and birds—The first storm—Their consequent apprehensions and forebodings—They proceed farther the next morning to survey the country—Eve's surprise at seeing a dead bird—They ascend a hill, where Adam erects a dwelling—He finds some sheep—Adam's despondency—An angel appears, and assures them they are still under divine protection—Adam's conversation with the angel—He is enjoined to erect an altar, and to celebrate that day of reconciliation by the sacrifice of a young lamb—The angel gives them an insight into the merciful dispensations of Providence—Their holy transport on the departure of the angel—Adam erects the altar, as commanded—The first winter and their apprehensions at its dreary appearance—The return of spring—Adam cultivates a little field—A flame descends on the altar—The first sacrifice—Birth of Cain—Adam's joy and gratitude—The succeeding births of Mahala, Abel, and Thirza—Adam concludes his narrative, and receives the thanks of his children.

THE

DEATH OF ABEL.

CANTO II.

WHILE in th' enjoyment of domestic bliss
This happy family together sat,
Thus cheerly spoke the father of mankind—

"Now, my dear children, now, indeed, you feel
That real joy, that exquisite delight, 5
Which rectitude diffuses thro' the soul—
'Tis virtue only makes us truly blest!
'Tis she that renders us susceptible
Of that felicity, which is enjoy'd
By the pure spirits who reside above. 10
While we to Reason's voice attend—while we
With gratitude receive the gifts of Heav'n,
And place our confidence in the Most High,

We then anticipate celestial joys!
But, when unruly passions bear the sway, 15
And drag us down into dark labyrinths,
So great's the gloom, all nature smiles in vain—
Disquietude, remorse, and misery
Embitter life, and banish ev'ry hope!
Shame and repentance are th' effects of sin; 20
Yes, my dear children, you may well believe
A father, whom experience hath made wise.
Say, my beloved Eve—thou, who wast erst
The partner of my grief, now of my joy—
Oh! say, cou'd we have thought, when, hand in hand,
With streaming eyes and hearts with anguish torn, 26
To blissful Paradise we bade adieu—
Cou'd we have thought, when we, alas! became
Th' only inhabitants of this wide earth,
That in a world, for our transgressions curs'd, 30
We ever should have known those happy hours?"

Now Adam paus'd, and Abel thus rejoin'd—

"Dear father, as the ev'ning is so mild,
If otherwise thy thoughts be not engag'd,
Or that the recollection of the past 35
Be not too painful, list to my request—

Once more relate th' adventures of that time,
When thou and my beloved mother were
The first inhabitants of this wide world."

All, now delighted with the youth's request, 40
Their eyes, in silent expectation, fix'd
On Adam, who immediately replied—

"How, my dear children, at this happy time,
Can I refuse your wish to gratify?
Yes! I'll impart to you those great events 45
Which—in those days of penitence and shame—
Of grace and consolation,—had occurr'd;
When the offended Deity was pleas'd
By cheering promises to raise fall'n man.
Where, Eve, shall I my narrative commence? 50
Shall I begin with the unhappy hour
When we departed from sweet Paradise?
But, my beloved, 'tis too much I see—
The tears already tremble in thine eye."

"But they are tears of gratitude and love, 55
And not the bitter tears of hopeless grief
Which then I shed," return'd the modest dame.
"Begin, dear Adam, with that dreadful moment,

When, full of shame and anguish, I look'd back,
For the last time, on Eden's blissful bow'rs, 60
And on thy bosom sank, as if awaiting
Th' immediate execution of a threat,
By which I'm doom'd to be the dust I was.
But the sensations I experienc'd then
With thy permission I'll myself describe; 65
I know thy tenderness, and am convinc'd,
To spare my feelings, thou, dear Adam, wou'dst
Too lightly pass o'er this affecting scene!"

To this acceded all, and Eve began—

"Conducted by the angel of the Lord, 70
We now were banish'd from the seat of bliss.
He for this purpose had commission'd been
By the Most High; but, with benignant looks,

l. 69.—The abrupt manner in which Eve commences the narrative in the original, rendered the introduction of this line absolutely necessary. Abel entreats his father to relate these adventures (*l.* 33 to 39); Adam complies, and enquires of Eve where he shall begin (*l.* 50 to 52); and, Eve requests him to commence his history from the time of their departure from Eden, (*l.* 53 to 63:) of course an ordinary reader might overlook the simple reason given for Eve's beginning, (*l.* 66 to 68,) and suppose Adam to be the speaker.

l. 70 to 80.—Our translators, Mrs. Collyer and Mr. Shoberl, vary materially in their arrangement of these lines: the latter omits all mentio

And soothing words he cheer'd our drooping spirits—
Bade us to trust in our offended God, 75
And think of all his gracious promises.
At Eden's gate he stopp'd, and now, behind us,
Terrifically wav'd his flaming sword—
'This gate I guard,' said he, 'for never shall
Pollution find admittance here again.' 80
We now descended to this gloomy earth,
And solitary wanderers became!
Alas! we found no Eden here—all round
A wide and dreary wilderness appear'd!
Here were no blooming flow'rs, no fragrant groves; 85
For o'er the surface of the barren soil
So thinly scatter'd were the trees and shrubs,
They seem'd like islands on th' extensive ocean.

of the angels stopping to guard the gate of Paradise, which is not only poetical, but accounts for his having left Adam and Eve together.

l. 88.—This simile is omitted by Mrs. Collyer, and censured by Mr. Shoberl in a note, as derogatory to the "simplicity and comparative ignorance, which must have prevailed in the first ages."—On the same ground the fastidious critic may cavil at many other passages in this poem: but, even in this note, Mr. Shoberl makes a remark, which is a sufficient vindication of this seeming inconsistency: "The reader will perceive, from various parts of this performance, that the author must have been intimately acquainted with the immortal work of Milton, in which the poet represents the arch-angel Michael shewing to Adam, from the summit of a lofty hill, the whole earth extended beneath him, and the scenes that were to take place upon it." Gessner, we find, makes Adam and Eve *descend* to the earth from *lofty* Eden; and we may suppose the soothing

Now, hand in hand, my partner and myself
Pursu'd our way, but knew not where we went. 90
Despairing looks I often cast behind,
And wept for joys that never could return!
Nor dar'd I now to raise my guilty head
To look at the dear object near my side—
The wretched dupe of my depravity— 95
The partner of my grief and punishment!
With speechless agony he slowly walk'd,
His eyes fix'd on the steril ground—Anon
He rais'd them, and with wild astonishment
The miserable wilderness survey'd; 100
Then look'd at me—with tenderness he look'd—
Beheld my tears, and press'd me to his bosom.

"While now descending the steep hill, each step
Diminish'd gradually our view of Eden—

and benignant angel gave them every information that was necessary, which the parents in due time communicated to their children. Why should we think our first parents so very *simple* and *ignorant*? Adam was made after the likeness of his Creator—he gave names to all the cattle, the fowl of the air, and every beast of the field, and must consequently have been endued with no little understanding. The woman was formed of one of his ribs, and ought, therefore, to be allowed to possess a *portion* of his knowledge. We may also imagine that, in this primitive age, there were islands on the sea, that might, on certain eminences, have been visible to the eye; for we may with great reason believe, that the earth had a different appearance at this period to that which took place after the deluge in Noah's time. How many islands, which we are wholly *ignorant* of, might then have been washed away!

I paus'd—look'd back—then sobb'd, and thus bewail'd
The forfeiture of such celestial bliss— 106
'O Paradise! my native soil—perhaps
I never more shall see those happy bowers,
In which thou, my beloved—if I still
May call thee, Adam, by that tender name— 110
Didst for a help-mate pray to Heav'n, to share
Thy ev'ry joy; and didst from thine own side
Receive a mate, that blasted ev'ry bliss!
Alas! ye flow'rs, rear'd by my careful hand,
For whom your fragrance do you now diffuse? 115
To whom your beauties do you now disclose?
Ye shady, ye delightful arbours, who
Now in your aromatic twilight walks?
Ye blooming shrubs, ye verdant groves, for whom
Your salutary fruits do you produce? 120
Ah me! now banish'd from your sweet retreats,
I never more your comforts shall enjoy!
Oh, no! too pure is that balsamic air—
Too holy, too celestial, is that place
To be contaminated by vile sinners! 125
We once were happy.—Ah! what are we now?
Degraded! fallen! We once were innocent—
The blessed angels condescended then
To be the monitors, the friends, of man;

For pure and spotless from his Maker's hands 130
He came—but now, alas! he is a wretch—
And thou too art a wretch—yes, thou, my dear—
(I dare not add the name of husband now,)
Seduc'd by me, thou art a very wretch!
Oh! hate me not.—Oh! cast me not away— 135
Thou hast just cause to spurn me! but be kind—
Yes! I conjure thee, by our common grief—
By all the cheering promises of Heav'n,
Forsake me not; but love as thou wert wont.
Well I deserve thy hatred and thy scorn, 140
But still permit me to attend thy steps,
To serve, to cherish, and to sooth thy pains.
Thy looks shall be my law—in them I'll read
All thy commands, anticipate thy wants—
I will collect soft flowers for thy couch— 145
I'll wander far thro' solitary wilds,
And for thy food the choicest fruits provide—
And, Oh! how very happy shall I be,
If these my feeble services may win
One smile of love, one tender look of pity!' 150

"Here fail'd my voice, my strength forsook me too,
And doubtless to the earth I should have fall'n,
Had not your father caught me in his arms!

Most fervently he press'd me to his heart,
And mingled tears with mine.—'O Eve,' he cried, 155
Still art thou the dear object of my love—
Hence then those fears, nor let us aggravate
By self-reproaches this our keen distress!
Think on the lenity of the Almighty,
Who, ev'n in chastisement, hath been so kind! 160
We have deserv'd a much severer fate;
But, oh! remember, when on our offence
He sentence pass'd, by gracious promises
That sentence he was pleas'd to mitigate.
What! tho' these gracious promises at present 165
Are in a kind of sacred darkness veil'd,
Yet Divine Mercy from amidst the gloom
Emits a ray that softens Divine Justice.
Hence then with self and mutual reproaches—
Oh! had our punishment been adequate 170
To our deserts, where should we now have been?
Oh! my beloved, let's not then give way
To rash complaints, and render thus ourselves
Still more unworthy of th' Almighty's favor!
No fruitless murmurs should pollute our lips: 175
Oh let them rather be employ'd in sounds
Of adoration, gratitude, and praise!
God is all-wise—through darkness he can see—

His penetrating eye can quickly fathom
The deepest secrets of a sinner's heart. 180
God is all-merciful—he will accept
The weak endeavour for a well-wrought deed.
Yes, my beloved, our imperfect thanks
He with complacency will still regard,
And smile benignant on our feeble efforts. 185
Come, then, my dearest Eve.—Come to my arms—
Oh! let reciprocal affection tend
T' alleviate reciprocal distress.
United thus, we'll baffle the attacks
Of sin—we'll triumph o'er our deadly foe. 190
Still love and harmony shall dwell among us:
By tender sympathy and mutual care
To meliorate each other's lot we'll try,
And lighten thus the burthen of this life:
Then, when the hour of death arrives—an hour 195
Which will, it seems, be slow and unexpected—
Thou shalt be my support, and I be thine.
But evening now draws near: to yonder spot,
Where o'er the rock the stately poplars wave,

l. 195 to 197.—Such were Adam's imperfect notions of death, that he imagined the curse would fall upon himself and Eve at the *same* time. Mrs. Collyer omits this passage, and also some of the preceding and succeeding lines.

We'll bend our steps; there we may find, perhaps, 200
A resting-place for the approaching night.

"Here ceas'd your father, and pursu'd his way—
His tender words reliev'd my heavy heart,
And added strength to my enfeebled frame:
I, with my ringlets, wip'd away the tears 205
That now bedew'd my cheeks—we then embrac'd.
At length, the hill descending, we approach'd
A grove of poplars which enclos'd a rock."

Now silent Eve became—a tender smile
On Adam she bestow'd—he took the hint, 210
And with the narrative proceeded thus:—

"Having, my children, thro' this grove advanc'd,
Within the rock beneath the poplars' shade,
We found a cave.—'See, dearest Eve,' said I,
'See what conveniences still Nature yields? 215
This charming grotto will afford us shelter;
This limpid stream too, that beside it flows,
Will slake our thirst.——Our lodging let's prepare!
But, ere we venture to repose ourselves,
I must secure the entrance, and exclude 220
Nocturnal enemies.'——'What enemies?'

Your mother with astonishment enquir'd—
'What enemies have we at night to dread?'
'Ah! my beloved, hast thou not observ'd,
That to the whole creation the dire curse 225
Extends—that now, between all animals
The bonds of friendship are, alas! dissolv'd,
And that the weak become the easy prey
Of those of greater strength. In yonder plain
I late perceiv'd a lion, young and fierce, 230
Pursue with fatal rage a timid fawn.
Like enmity I saw too in the air;
For all at variance were the feather'd race.
No longer boast we now of any sway,
Save over creatures of inferior strength: 235
Those, which so lately fawn'd, and which were wont
Their sportive gambols in our sight to play—
The lion, leopard, and the spotted tiger—
Now stand and menace us with glaring eyes,
Or speak their fury with tremendous roars. 240
By gentle usage we may chance, indeed,
T'insure th' attachment of a few; but reason—

l. 224 to 233.—As Adam and Eve have been hitherto together, since their departure from Eden, it may be asked, why Eve had not witnessed this enmity between the beasts and birds, as well as her husband? We must, therefore, suppose, that Adam made these observations, while Eve was looking back at the forfeited seat of bliss, and bewailing her lost happiness. (*l.* 105, &c.)

The gift of Providence—must be our shield
Against th' attacks of the most savage kind.

" Your mother now propos'd to stray around— 245
Some leaves and flow'rs collect to form a couch—
And gather fruit too from the neighb'ring trees.
So great her fear, she kept me still in view.
In the mean time, the brambles and the shrubs,
Which grew before our grotto, I entwin'd, 250
To fortify the entrance.——Eve return'd—
She with celerity perform'd her task,
(For apprehension had occasion'd haste,)
And on the tender grass the fruit she laid.

" Now enter'd we the cave, and, seated on 255
Our couch of intermingled leaves and flow'rs,
Enjoy'd our simple meal; for it was sweeten'd
By tender converse and endearing looks.
In the mean while, a thick and gloomy cloud,
Which o'er the face of Heaven had extended, 260
Now gradually obscur'd the setting sun;
Darkness at length pervaded the whole earth,

l. 245, &c.—These lines are given by Mr. Shoberl as a quotation from Eve: " And I will go," said Eve, " to collect herbs and flowers," &c.: but by Mrs. Collyer, as a narrative, " Eve, with timid looks, keeping me " in her sight, went to gather flowers," &c.

While Nature seem'd, in silent dread, t' await
Her dissolution.——A tempestuous wind
Succeeded—how it roar'd among the hills! 265
The forest-trees were torn up by the roots!
From the black clouds now issu'd vivid flames,
And thunder burst in awful peals above!
With terror struck at this tremendous scene,
Your mother on my throbbing bosom sank; 270
She gasp'd for breath, and feebly thus exclaim'd,
'He comes!—in flames he comes! Oh, dreadful sight!
The Judge—th' Avenger comes!—for my offence
To doom us and all nature to destruction!
O Adam—O my love!'——She said no more, 275
But pale and trembling clung unto my breast.

'Be calm, dear Eve,' I cried, 'compose thyself;
Here let us kneel—let us devoutly pray—
To Him, who now, in awful majesty, 279
'Midst darkness walks—whose rolling thunders speak
His near approach—whose lightnings mark his steps!
O Thou, who with divine benignity—
With gracious condescension didst look down
On man, and all thy glorious attributes
Didst temper, when from thy creating hand 285
Existence I receiv'd—how terrible

Art thou, when thus in judgment thou appearest!
Oh! spare us, Lord—Oh! spare thy sinful creatures,
Nor let us by thy wrath be yet consum'd!'
Then, at the entrance of the cave, we knelt, 290
And sore intimidated, pray'd aloud,
Expecting the great Judge would, from his thunder,
This dread denunciation issue forth,
Ye both shall die; and by my fury's heat
This earth, from which you sprang, shall be dissolv'd!
Incessant rain now from above descended; 296
The lightnings ceas'd to flash; and, at a distance,
The thunder faintly roll'd. My head I rais'd,
And your desponding mother thus address'd:—

'Dear Eve, th' Almighty over us hath pass'd; 300
He will not yet annihilate the earth;
He will not yet command our breath to cease!
We live—we're still permitted to exist!
How cou'd his gracious promise, that thy seed
Shou'd bruise the serpent's head, be verified, 305
Did he think fit t'exterminate mankind?
Eternal Wisdom—Everlasting Truth
Cannot retract the promise that is made!'

l. 304, 5.—Gen. ch. iii. v. 15.

"Thus solac'd, we arose, forgot our fears;
The clouds dispers'd; the Heav'ns resum'd their lustre;
Throughout the sky the setting sun diffus'd 310
Delightful splendor.--Such it did appear
As we were wont in Eden to behold,
When hosts of angels, hov'ring o'er our heads
On fleecy clouds, ting'd them with sparkling flames, 315
And spread celestial radiance all around.
Such was the brightness of the western sky,
With renovated charms all nature smil'd,
And ev'ry hue fresh brilliancy acquir'd.
On us, who now with reverential awe 320
Knelt down to celebrate this solemn scene,
The setting sun shed his departing rays.
Such the first tempest--such too the first day
We pass'd, since happy Paradise we left.

"Into grey twilight soon began to fade 325
The glowing tints of ev'ning, and the moon
A feeble lustre spread o'er all the earth:
For the first time, we, by the frost of night,
Were sorely chill'd, tho' we before had been
Scorch'd by the ardor of the noon-day sun. 330

Now wrapp'd we up ourselves in skins of beasts,
Which our all-merciful Creator had,
On our departure from the seat of bliss,
Provided, to convince us of our wants,
And of his readiness t'afford relief. 335
Our wearied limbs then on our leafy bed
We stretch'd, and in each other's fond embrace
Awaited the approach of balmy sleep.
It came—but unattended with that ease,
That sweet delight, produc'd by the repose 340
We, in a state of innocence, enjoy'd.

l. 331, &c.—This being the most objectionable part in the whole poem, it was deemed necessary to deviate a little from the original, which runs thus: "Our beneficent Maker had condescended to gird our loins with the skins of beasts before our leaving Paradise, to shew that he had not withdrawn his succouring hand." If Adam and Eve had been clad in these skins by their Maker or his angel, on their expulsion from Eden, the heat of the day (*l.* 330) must have been rendered more incommodious to them, and they must also have derived less benefit from them during the cold night. Every blessing which man enjoys is certainly provided for him by his Maker, but he is to toil for and apply those blessings to his own use. The scriptures inform us, that the first kind of covering which Adam and Eve put on, were invented by themselves; for they fastened together (or, as the translators of the Bible have rendered it, *sewed* together) the broad leaves of fig-trees, Gen. ch. iii. v. 7. The lines are, therefore, rendered ambiguous here, so that the reader may either imagine the Almighty *gave* Adam and Eve those skins, or *left them in their way;* for, as there was enmity among the beasts, and they now preyed on each other, (*l.* 226 to 231,) it is more natural to suppose, that Adam in the evening had found those skins, and converted them to clothing. Our author, Gessner, seems to have omitted a very happy opportunity here of displaying his poetical talents.

Imagination then presented none
But smiling and transporting images—
Then no inquietudes, remorse, and fear,
Created dreams of a terrific cast, 345
And fill'd our mind with horror and dismay!
Serene, however, was this night, and calm;
Uninterrupted were our slumbers too;
But, oh! dear Eve, how diff'rent to that night,
When first I led thee to the nuptial bower. 350
A more delightful fragrance never had
The flow'rs exhal'd, a more harmonious strain
The bird of night had never warbled forth,
Or a more gentle radiance the pale moon
Had never shed, than when, beloved Eve, 355
In Paradise united we became.——
But, hush—why on ideas do I dwell,
Which 'waken griefs that to repose were lull'd?

"We slept, my children, till the morning sun
The glist'ning dew dried up. Refresh'd with sleep 360
We then arose, while with their tuneful notes
The birds were hailing the return of light.
Their number was at present small—the earth
No other animals contain'd than those
Who had, impell'd by divine instinct, fled 365

After the fall from Paradise, that death
Might not pollute the garden of the Lord.

"Then having, at the entrance of the cave,
Our morning adorations offer'd up,
To Eve I said: 'Let's farther on proceed, 370
And this extended country well survey—
The Lord has giv'n us liberty of choice.
We may for our abode another place
More fertile, more salubrious, select,
Which greater beauties and superior means 375
Of living may afford.—Seest thou, dear Eve,
Yon stream, that thro' the verdant valley winds?
The summit of the hill beside it seems
With verdure green, and, at this distant view,
Methinks 'tis crown'd too with a range of trees! 380
'Lead where thou wilt, I'll follow thee with pleasure,'
Your mother said, and gently press'd my hand.—
Our course then to the mountain we pursu'd.

"As we proceeded, just above our heads,
A little bird, in evident distress, 385
Flutter'd all round, and utter'd plaintive cries:
With ruffled plumage and a feeble air
'Mong the low bushes droopingly it perch'd.

Eve hastily approach'd to know the cause;
When lo! another, lifeless, on the grass 390
Before the little mourner lay extended!
Your mother stoop'd—attentively she gaz'd,
Then took it up, and all in vain essay'd
To rouse the corse from an imagin'd sleep.
'Twill not awake,' she mournfully exclaim'd, 395
And trembling laid it on the grass again.
'Twill not awake! Alas! it never will!'
Tears gush'd now from her eyes.—'Ah!' she resum'd,
'Perhaps, poor little mourner, Oh! perhaps,
This was thy mate.—Alas! then—it is I, 400
Sweet sufferer, 'tis I—wretch that I am,
Who've brought calamity on ev'ry creature!
I am the cause—Oh! yes—the fatal cause;
And, for my sin, these animals are punish'd!'
Aloud she wept—then, turning round to me, 405
'See,' she exclaim'd, 'how cold and stiff it is!
No voice, no motion—ev'ry sense suspended,
And ev'ry limb incapable of action!
What's this?—Oh! tell me, Adam—is it death?
It is?—It must be!—Horror thrills my frame! 410
If this be death, and this the dreadful death

l. 411, &c.—This is justly esteemed the finest part of the Poem. Our author, by this little incident, makes Adam and Eve acquire better notions of death. See note on *l.* 195. See also lines 571 to 596.

With which we're threaten'd—Oh! how terrible!
Alas! should I, dear Adam, be depriv'd
Of thee, and, like the mate of this dead bird,
Be left disconsolate and sad behind, 415
What wou'd become of me?—Or what of thee,
If I be torn away from thy fond arms?
'Tis true, God can create another Eve;
But, tho' another Eve supply my place,
Oh! never, never cou'd she love like me, 420
Thy partner, in distress and banishment!
Ah! 'tis too much—I cannot bear the thought.

"In copious streams now flow'd her tears—she sank—
Depress'd with anguish on the ground she sank!
I rais'd her up—I press'd her to my heart, 425
Kiss'd her sweet cheeks, and mingled tears with hers.
'Cease, my beloved, cease, my dearest Eve,
To aggravate our common misery,'
I now exclaim'd.—'Let us confide in Him,

l. 413 to 422.—The apprehensions of Eve, on finding that the bird is absolutely dead, are exceedingly natural; and, though trifling as the object is which occasioned them, yet being the first victim of death she had ever witnessed, the introduction of the word *corse*, (a body, according to its primitive meaning,) in *l.* 394, cannot be deemed improper; particularly as that, from which it is derived, is applied by Ovid, not only to the bodies of animals, but various other shapes:

"In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas
"*Corpora*—"

Who with consummate wisdom governs all; 430
Tho', as a judge, he spreads dismay and awe,
Yet love and mercy still attend his throne.
Let not weak-sighted mortals then presume
To penetrate into his deep designs!
Why should Imagination make us wretched? 435
Why seek for sorrow in futurity,
And thus anticipate the worst of evils?
Was Reason by our wise Creator giv'n
To be employ'd in vain pre-sentiments?
No, no, dear Eve; for, by so doing, then, 440
Our eyes we most ungratefully should blind
To all the demonstrations of his mercy—
Of his benignity—we then ourselves
Should plunge still deeper into misery!
With matchless wisdom, with unbounded goodness, 445
Our destiny he orders and directs.
Then under his protection let's proceed
With humble confidence and holy awe,
And acquiesce in all his just decrees—
Let us devoutly offer up our praise, 450
Nor seek to know what he has not reveal'd.

"Now towards the hill in view we bent our way,
And through the fertile shrubs and thickets pass'd,

Which in abundance grew near the ascent:
We gain'd the summit.—Here a lofty cedar 455
'Bove the surrounding fruit-trees rear'd its head,
And with its wide-extending branches prov'd
A friendly shade, which still more cool and grateful
Was render'd by a limpid stream, that ran
In various windings 'mong the flow'rs beneath— 460
So fine a prospect of the earth's extent
This eminence afforded, that the view
Was bounded only by the misty air.
The sky, which form'd a concave round us, seem'd,
Where'er we turn'd, to touch the distant hills. 465
Your mother now addressing, I observ'd,
'This spot, methinks, a faint resemblance bears
To Paradise, tho' such a blissful place
We now, alas! can never hope to find!
Here let us fix, beloved, our abode. 470
Receive us, thou majestic cedar, then
Beneath thy pleasant shade.—Ye various trees,
Be your delicious produce our support,
The recompence of our laborious culture:
Yet never, never, will I pluck your fruit 475
Without returning grateful thanks to Heav'n.
Vouchsafe, O Lord, with a propitious eye
To look down from above on this our dwelling;

Vouchsafe to listen to the sinner's pray'r;
Accept the incense of humility— 480
Of gratitude, which shall each day—each hour—
From this umbrageous grove ascend to Thee!
Here, by the sweat of toil, will we procure
Our daily food—here, my beloved Eve,
Beneath this shade, shalt thou bring forth with pain,
And from this spot a progeny shall spring, 486
Which o'er th' extensive earth shall spread themselves—
And here too we'll await th' approach of death,
And mingle with the dust on which we tread.
Then deign, O Lord, poor sinners to regard, 490
And smile propitiously on our abode.'

"Thus fervently I pray'd, while, by my side,
Your mother knelt with hands together clasp'd,
And tearful eyes devoutly rais'd to Heav'n!

"Beneath the spreading cedar I began 495
A habitation to construct.—I fix'd
Fast in the earth a circle of firm stakes,
And interwove the whole with pliant twigs.
In the mean time, your mother undertook
The stream among the flowers to convey— 500
She prun'd and bound up the luxuriant branches

Of the young shrubs, the drooping plants supported,
And pick'd wild fruits. Thus, by our sweat and toil,
For the first time, a sweet repast we earn'd.

"I to the river went in search of reeds 505
To cover our new hut, and here perceiv'd
Five ewes, white as the floating noon-day clouds,
And a young ram, too, grazing on the shore.
I gently now advanc'd, lest they'd avoid me;
(As did of late the lion and the tiger, 510
Tho', ere the fall, with, or a kid or lamb,
They sported at my feet,) but no—they staid,
And suffer'd me to touch them. With a reed
I drove them all before me up the hill
Into the richest pasture, with intent 515
They shou'd in future feed there.—Eve was now
Erecting of the over-arching shrubs
A bow'r, and did not see my little flock,
Till by their bleating they attention drew.
Then, starting at the sound, the slender boughs 520
Dropp'd from her trembling hands—with timid air
She paus'd—at length she joyfully exclaim'd:—

'See, my dear Adam, they're as tractable,
As tame, and gentle, as in Paradise!

Engaging creatures, welcome! Ye shall dwell 525
With us—here ye will find abundant grass,
Luxuriant herbage, and a limpid stream.
Yes! all ye want is here—you need not stray.
Oh! how delightful it will be, while we
Are in the culture of our trees employ'd, 530
To see you gambol 'round us on the grass.
Ah! you shall find me an indulgent mistress!'
This said, she touch'd them on their woolly backs.

"Our habitation render'd now complete,
We at the entrance, in the shade, were seated, 535
Enjoying the cool breeze, and, with delight
And wonder, gazing on th' extensive landscape,
When Eve the silence interrupted thus—

'How charming, how diversified, this scene!
How fertile, and how full of blessings, too, 540
This earth, which we at first so barren thought!
Suppose, dear Adam, we select and add
To all the rich productions of this hill
The best and most agreeable that grow
Upon its borders, then will this our dwelling 545
Resemble Eden, in the same proportion,
(A distant likeness!) as that seat of bliss

(For so our visitors, the angels, hinted)
Does, on comparison, resemble Heav'n.
Ah! how enchanting was that blessed spot! 550
How fascinating all its sweet retreats!
There Nature shed her mildest influence—
There she display'd her most delightful charms:
Unnumber'd flow'rs with variegated tints
United there to captivate the eye: 555
All kinds of fruit, of blossoms, and of trees,
An endless mixture form'd to feast the senses!
How sweet, how fragrant, and how beautiful!
Alas! compar'd to that luxuriant spot,
What is this earth but mere sterility! 560
Few of the rich magnificent productions,
To which we were accustom'd, here we see!
This earth, perhaps, is render'd by the curse
Incapable of yielding such profusion;
Or Nature has, o'er diff'rent regions, now 565
Distributed her gifts with sparing hand;
And, O dear Adam, I've already mark'd,
That death throughout the whole creation has
His ravages extended far and wide!
Not only animals become his prey, 570
But vegetation shrinks too at his sight;

Corruption, seemingly the consequence
Of this fell spoiler, all the earth pervades!
I've seen the fruit fall to the ground and perish,
The shrubs and trees, stripp'd of their foliage, wither,
The drooping flow'rs too on their stalks decay— 576
But then I see, 'stead of the faded plants,
Young shoots spring up, new leaves succeed the old,
And, from the scatter'd seeds of blasted flow'rs,
Bloom forth another race.——Thus will it be— 580
We needs must die, and moulder with the dust,
But in our offspring we shall be renew'd.

"She ceas'd—and, deeply touch'd by her remarks,
I now observ'd—'Ah! my beloved Eve,
Far other cares my heavy heart oppress. 585
Oh! did our loss of Paradise consist
In only its productions, fruit, and flow'rs,
All these advantages—all these delights,
I could without a murmur have resign'd;
But to be banish'd from that sacred spot, 590
Which God by his immediate presence bless'd,
For, veiling his refulgent glory, here
He condescended 'mong the groves to walk,
And render visible his Mighty Self

To us, his creatures, while in solemn silence 595
All Nature celebrated his approach.—
This, this it is, which wrings my very heart;
This is a loss I always must deplore!
How oft, in prostrate adoration, I,
A creature of the dust, have dar'd t' address 600
Th' Almighty, who benignantly has deign'd
To hear, to answer too, the voice of man!
But ah! this privilege—the privilege
Of blessed spirits—we've for ever lost!
Can guilt with purity converse? Alas! 605
Can the Immaculate with sinners dwell,
Or walk upon that earth which he has curs'd?
'Tis true, that from his throne he still vouchsafes
To look down on our penitence and tears,
And that, in this our miserable state, 610
His mercy far exceeds our utmost hopes.
It also seems, that the angelic host,
To execute his will, this earth still visit;
But their celestial splendor now they veil,
No longer visible to sinful mortals; 615
And from this seat of vile corruption soar
With hasty wing--for spirits pure as these,
Who never yet offended the Most High,
Cannot regard contaminated man.

"'Twas thus we spake, and, wrapp'd in meditation,
With many strong emotions we survey'd 621
The country which before us lay—when, lo!
Descending gradually, an azure cloud
Now rested on the hill, whence issued forth
A form celestial, whose sweet countenance 625
With majesty and soft compassion beam'd.
We hastily arose, and bow'd our heads—
The angel then address'd us—'He, the Lord,
Whose throne's in Heav'n, has heard your conversation,
And me he thus commanded—Go, and tell 630
These children of affliction, that my presence
Is not by Heav'n's mere bound'ries circumscrib'd—
Throughout all my creation it extends!
Who gives the sun invigorating heat,
And who directs the stars to run their course? 635
Who makes the earth to yield these plants and fruit,
And day and night each other to succeed?
Who calls forth animals into existence?
By whom is that existence too preserv'd?
In Me they live, they move, and have their being. 640

l. 622, &c.—The appearance of the angel to Adam and Eve is suddenly and ingeniously introduced. The former now sees the error of his remarks, (*l.* 606, &c.) and becomes convinced of the omnipresence of his Creator.

Who, dost thou think, prevents thee, Adam, now
From mingling with the dust? I! saith the Lord—
I by my pow'r sustain thee—I! to whom
All hearts are open, all desires are known!

" With holy awe impress'd, I rais'd my eyes, 645
Tho' dazzled by the radiance that surrounded
This messenger of Heav'n, and thus exclaim'd—
' How great, how inconceivably immense,
The mercy of the Lord is!—he beholds
With soft compassion man's dejected state, 650
And sends his angels with the balm of cheer.
Abash'd, confounded, I before thee stand,
Scarce able to look up or speak—yet, Oh!
Bless'd spirit! Oh, permit me to declare
The sad forebodings, which oppress my heart. 655
I know, I feel, that God is ev'ry where—
I see him in his mercies, in his works;
And all the earth is with his presence fill'd.
Can we, who are defil'd—can we expect,
That He, who is consummate purity, 660
Would more distinctly manifest himself

l. 643-4.—The original runs thus—"I guard thee by my Providence, and know the secret breathings of thy soul and all the purposes of thine heart," which so resembles the collect that precedes the Ten Commandments, that this quotation cannot be deemed improper.

To abject sinners?—but, alas! I dread
That my posterity, my sons unborn,
May sink still deeper into wickedness,
And misery on earth be thus encreas'd. 665
Ah me! involv'd in wretchedness and guilt,
Will they not from Jehovah be estrang'd,
And all idea of the most—most perfect
Be lost, or in obscurity envelop'd?
As I have fall'n, ah! they may also fall— 670
Fall, by degrees, into the lowest depths
Of sin, and thus be more and more debas'd!
The time will come, when I must quit this life;
Yet true it is, tho' I shall not be with them
To testify the goodness of the Lord, 675
The meanest insect will proclaim it—but,
If He, our Judge and our Creator, still
Be pleas'd from man his countenance to hide,
Will not the voice of Nature be too weak
To make a due impression on his mind, 680
And true devotion consequently cease?

l. 663.—This double superlative is warranted by one of a similar kind, (the *Most Holiest*,) which is frequently repeated in the Psalms. Some of our modern grammarians, indeed, contend, that *perfect* is a superlative of itself; but, there may be degrees of *perfection* as well as of *holiness*, *goodness*, &c.; and, if the learned languages admit them, why should not the English? See "The English Tutor."

These are the apprehensions—these the thoughts—
The sad forebodings, which oppress my heart;
And, Oh! I tremble—yes, with horror shrink,
While to futurity I forward look; 685
And gloomy 'imagination brings to view
A wretched race—a num'rous progeny,
Who well may curse me as the fatal cause
Of all their blindness, misery, and sin!'

This said, with countenance benign and sweet 690
Thus the celestial being made reply—

" Know, sire of men, that the Supreme, in whom
And by whom all creation lives and moves,
Will still on thy posterity look down.
Their sins indeed will oft provoke the Lord 695
To grasp his thunder, and in wrath appear.
Then shall the guilty, trembling in the dust,
His pow'r acknowledge, and his vengeance dread.
But far more oft in mercy than in justice
The God of heav'n will manifest himself! 700
Tho' judgment be the Lord's mysterious work,
With him commiseration ever dwells:
When therefore they have wander'd from his ways,
He graciously will call them back and still

Show favor to the truly penitent. 705
He will among them raise up ministers,
Whom by his holy spirit he'll enlighten;
These shall the mists of ignorance disperse—
These to repentance shall their brethren call,
And lead them from the wilderness of sin 710
Into the path of virtue:—then shall men
Adore, in spirit and in truth, that God
Who is alone immaculate and just!
Moreover faithful prophets he will send,
Who, or his judgments, or his mercies, shall, 715
While hid in dark futurity, foretell;
That by th' accomplishment of these events,
(Which to short-sighted mortals might appear
The work of chance,) posterity may know
Eternal wisdom guides and governs all! 720
Oft by his angels, oft by miracles,
He to the sons of men will speak—nay, more,
Some righteous persons there will be, to whom
He from his throne will graciously descend,
And hold with them more intimate communion. 725
At length, to all mankind shall be reveal'd

l. 722—5.—Here the poet particularly alludes to the Almighty's manifestation of himself to Moses. EXODUS, ch. iii.

The wondrous myst'ry of salvation, when
The woman's seed shall crush the serpent's head.'

" Now silent he, and the benignant smile
Which on his countenance so sweetly beam'd 730
Encourag'd me again to raise my voice.

" Celestial friend! if by that tender name
A sinner dare address thee—yet why not?
Sure angels cannot him reject, whom God
Hath not rejected—him, towards whom such love—735
Such mercy is so brilliantly display'd,
That heav'n itself is in amazement lost,
And the poor soul, now humbled in the dust,
In vain attempts her gratitude to speak!—
Oh let me know—if thou permitted be 740
To draw aside the veil which now obscures
Those sacred mysteries—Oh let me know,
What means that gracious promise of the Lord—
The woman's seed shall crush the serpent's head—
And what the dreadful sentence—*Thou shalt die?*' 745

" The angel answer'd—' I will not conceal
What to unfold I may—then, Adam, know—
As soon as thou hadst sinn'd, the voice of God

To all the spirits round his throne, pronounc'd,
'Man hath my will transgress'd, and he shall die!' 750
An instantaneous awful darkness veil'd
Th' Almighty's throne, and solemn silence reign'd;
But consternation did not long prevail;
For soon the darkness was dispers'd, and silence
As soon gave way to praise and adoration! 755
Oh, never shone the Majesty of heav'n
With more magnificence—more lustre—save
That glorious time when His creative voice
Pass'd forth into th' immeasurable void,
And call'd into existence Sun and Stars! 760
With expectation the celestial host
Awaited th' issue of the splendid scene,
When thro' the regions of high vaulted heav'n
Again resounded the Almighty's voice,
Utt'ring these words of clemency and mercy— 765
'I will not from the sinner turn my face—
All earth shall testify my loving kindness—
Of woman an avenger shall be born,
And thus her seed shall crush the serpent's head!
Hell shall not in this victory rejoice— 770
For death shall lose his prey—be glad then, heav'ns!'
Thus spake th' Omnipotent—whose glory now
With such effulgent grandeur shone around

That, by the blaze o'erpower'd, ev'n th' archangels
Had doubtless sank 'fore the resplendent throne, 775
Had not th' intolerable radiance been
As quickly temper'd by a passing cloud.
Then all the bless'd inhabitants of heav'n,
With joy triumphant, celebrated loud
The sacred mystery of boundless grace— 780
Their golden harps attun'd they to the praise
Of Him whose works his tender mercies speak.
But how, or when, the Everlasting will
Provide for sinners an atonement meet,
The very angels cannot comprehend; 785
But 'tis enough—eternal truth hath said it!
We only know—which to communicate
I may, and therefore rest assur'd 'tis so—
We know—that death is of his sting depriv'd,
And that the soul, which in her present state 790
Can have no perfect knowledge of the Lord,
Is thereby from the burden of the curse
Releas'd—that while the body, which was dust,
Shall to the dust return—th' immortal soul,
Stripp'd of uncleanness, shall ascend above, 795
There to enjoy—with angels and archangels,
And all the host of heav'n—eternal bliss!
Attend then, Adam, to what God hath said—

To thee and to thy seed I will be gracious—
And lo! between us there shall be a sign 800
That this great promise still shall be remember'd.
Here, on this hill, an altar thou shalt raise,
And on this day's return in ev'ry year—
(This day in which the promise hath been made)
Thou a young lamb shalt offer;—then from heav'n 805
Shall come a flame, and settle on thy altar.
This sacrifice shall be each year renew'd,
And from above shall annually descend
The flame which shall thy offering consume.
Thus all of God's inscrutable decrees 810
He suffers to be known—I have reveal'd:
Moreover, by divine appointment, this
I needs must certify—thy state, O Adam,
Is not so solitary as thou think'st—
Tho' curs'd this earth, still angels hover round it—815
Pure spirits, who, commission'd by the Lord,
O'er all creation faithfully preside,
And guard thy ev'ry step with watchful care.

"The angel then approach'd, and touch'd our eyes—
But oh! no words, no language can express 820
Th' innumerable beauties of the scene
That to the view now open'd—All the earth

Was with a group of heav'nly beings fill'd,
More captivating—more divine than Eve,
When first from her Creator's hands she came, 825
And, with soft utterance and modest grace,
Awaken'd me to love and ecstacy!
Some were employing all due means to cause
Light exhalations from the earth t' arise,
That in the course of time they might descend 830
In gentle dews and fertilizing showers—
Others, reclining near the murm'ring streams,
With care attended lest the springs shou'd fail,
And vegetable nature by a drought
Be of her humid aliment depriv'd. 835
Among the meadows sev'ral were dispers'd:
Of these—some watch'd the growth of fruit; and some
Spread on the op'ning flow'rs the radiant tints
Of ev'ning or the azure of the sky;
Then, having gently breath'd upon their buds, 840
Communicated to them balmy odors—
While others in the shady grove appear'd,
Intense upon their various labors—these
On their bright wings the gentle breezes wafted,
Which, whisp'ring 'mong the foliage of the trees, 845
Now fann'd the flow'rs—then on the surface play'd
Of the meand'ring brook and dimpled lake.

Some, having their allotted tasks perform'd,
Were now reposing in the cooling shade,
And hymns, inaudible to mortal ear, 850
They, to the praises of the Lord of Hosts,
In chorus, chanted, to their golden harps.
Now, walking on our hill, or 'mong our bow'rs
Reclining—sev'ral of these friendly sprites
I saw, who, by their sympathetic looks, 855
Seem'd to bewail the wretched state of man.
But while at these celestial charms we gaz'd,
Our eyes at length their impotence resum'd,
And suddenly the glorious scene we lost.

"The angel then observ'd—'These, Adam, are 860
The tutelary spirits of the earth,
Which, tho' the curse extends throughout the globe,
Is still with prodigies and charms replete;
For God, who to innumerable beings
Existence gave, was pleas'd they should remain. 865
Of these, however, many, tho' the cause
Of admiration and unbounded joy
To the celestial host, are too sublime,
Too delicate, indeed, for mortal sense!
These spirits, whom thou 'hast seen, by Heav'n's com-
mand 870

Directing Nature in her secret course,
Guide and complete her various operations,
According to th' immutable decrees
Of the Most High—they likewise are appointed
The guardians of mankind—to watch, unseen, 875
And from impending dangers to protect.
Yes, Adam, God hath giv'n his angels charge
T' attend to all thy ways, to guard thy steps,
Assist thee in thy labors, and convert
Apparent evil into real good. 880
The glad, tho' silent, witnesses are they
Of thy domestic happiness—for know,
All thy most secret actions they behold
With smiles of approbation, when correct;
But, when the contrary, with deep concern! 885
By these his agents, the Almighty will,
In future times, bless nations with abundance,
And visit the rebellious sons of men
With famine or the sword, that, thus chastis'd,
They may abandon all their evil ways. 890

"The angel ceas'd, and having on us both
A look of mild complacency bestow'd,
In a refulgent cloud then disappear'd—
We now, with holy transport fill'd, knelt down,

And, shedding tears, in falt'ring words essay'd 895
T' express our gratitude to the Supreme!

"Obedient to th' injunction of the Lord,
An altar, on the summit of our hill,
I strait erected. Eve, in the mean time,
Was busily employ'd in making round 900
The sacred spot a kind of Paradise—
All the most fragrant—the most charming flow'rs,
She in the meadows and the hills could find,
With cheer she planted on each side; and these
Each morning and each ev'ning she refresh'd 905
With the clear water of th' adjacent stream.
'Assist me, guardian angels,' she exclaim'd,
'In this my task—for, ah! without your aid
In vain must be the labor of my hands.
Bestow, I pray, on these transplanted flow'rs 910
A greater share of fragrance and of charms,
Than in their native soil they had acquir'd;
For this enclosure—all that is therein,
Is consecrated to the Lord of Hosts!
Lo! I, of trees, this spacious circle planted, 915
Which, by their thick extending branches, throw
A solemn shade around the holy altar.'

"Amid these occupations, soon elaps'd
The scorching summer.—Autumn then arriv'd,
And well repaid our toil with various fruit. 920
This season too was nearly at an end,
When soon succeeded loud inclement blasts,
Which terrified the ear—the mountains all
Were with a hoar and foggy mantle clad.
This Nature's sad appearance we beheld 925
With consternation; for we knew not then,
That, by her liberal profusion, now
The earth, exhausted, needed the repose
Of gloomy winter to recruit her strength:
For, ere the fall, the seasons had no change; 930
Mild spring, gay summer, and abundant autumn,
Went hand in hand, and, smiling all at once,
Their various and delightful gifts bestow'd.
The gloom, diffus'd o'er the sweet face of nature,
Continued to encrease—soon wither'd all 935
The plants, save a few solitary flow'rs,
Which in the meads and round the altar bloom'd:
But ev'n these few, by their now drooping heads,
Seem'd their approaching fall to mourn. At length
The raging winds, which quick began to blow, 940
The trees of their discolour'd foliage stripp'd,
And from the branches shook the latest fruit.

At times, accompanied by rain in torrents,
They whistled thro' the melancholy plains,
And, all creation rend'ring desolate, 945
Cover'd the mountains' ghastly tops with snow.
What strange emotions—what foreboding fears
This scene of havoc rais'd within our minds!
I thought, that of the curse pronounc'd 'gainst man
These were the first effects.—'Alas!' I cried, 950
'Must then this earth forego all the remains
Of beauty, of utility, which she,
Since her degraded state had still preserv'd?
Tho' poor, compar'd to Paradise, indeed,
Yet was she rich enough to give us all 955
Cou'd sweeten life, and recompense our toil.
But, ah! if the divine displeasure cause
Such devastation o'er the earth to spread,
How destitute must be our future days!
What of our promis'd offspring will become?' 960

"Such our reflections were at first—but soon
Our hopes reviv'd, and better thoughts occurr'd.
Encourag'd by the promises of God,
Each other we consol'd, and from our minds
Those gloomy apprehensions banish'd, still 965
Determin'd, ev'n in this our dreary state,
T' adore and put our trust in the Supreme.

"A store of fruits (which on the hearth were dried,
To keep them from corruption and decay)
We strait collected, and with care preserv'd. 970
Our cottage too I strengthen'd, that it might
Protect us from the future storms and rain.
Our little flock, with melancholy looks,
Now wander'd on the hill in quest of food,
And nipp'd the scanty herbage, which, amidst 975
This desolation, here and there, sprang up.
Oft rang'd I all the meadows and the hills
To gather for them a supply of fodder,
Lest they might perish in their fold for want.

"How heavily and slowly pass'd the days 980
Of this tempestuous—this rainy season!
At length the genial sun return'd, which soon
The gloomy clouds dispers'd, while gentler winds
Chas'd from the mountain-tops the ling'ring mists.

"Again in youthful beauty Nature smil'd; 985
With lovely green again the fields were clad;
A variegated multitude of flow'rs
Adorn'd the meads, and 'fore th' enliv'ning sun
Expanded their innumerable charms.
Again the bushes and the trees began 990

Their various blossoms to unfold to view;
Throughout all Nature new-born gladness reign'd.
Thus, that delightful morning of the year,
Sweet blooming Spring, revisited the earth.

"None of the trees with so much beauty flourish'd,
As those, which round the altar I had planted; 996
And Eve, with rapturous astonishment,
Beheld the flow'rs, which to this sacred spot
She had remov'd, their tender shoots display.
O my dear children, language is too weak 1000
Our ecstacy—our wonder, to describe!
With holy rev'rence we approach'd the altar,
While on the consecrated place the sun
His purest radiance shed.——All nature seem'd
To join in the Creator's praise—the flow'rs 1005
With most refreshing odours fill'd the air—
The trees, extending wide their blossom'd branches,
The altar overspread—the winged insects,
Which now inhabited the tender grass,
Chirp'd forth their joy—and, from the lofty boughs,
Incessantly the little warblers sang. 1011
We knelt, while tears of gratitude and joy,
Which from our eyes fell on the grassy turf,
Now mingled with the morning dew—we pray'd—

With ardor pray'd, and to the God of Nature 1015
Ascended these our pray'rs—yes, to that God,
Who is all grace—all goodness!—who converts
Apparent evil to substantial good.

"Resolving on the hill a little field
To cultivate, the seeds I had reserv'd 1020
From Autumn's produce, in the earth I now
Began to sow, and fruit-trees to transplant,
Which, scatter'd o'er the country, I had found.
Oft nature, chance, or thought, suggested means
For the acceleration of my labor; 1025
But ignorance of the seasons and the soils
(Not judging when and where to cast the grains)
As oft that labor render'd ineffective.
Imagination frequently conceiv'd
Some little project to facilitate 1030
My daily toil—but vain my sanguine hopes—
I was deceiv'd, and ever should have fail'd,
Had not the guardian angels, who attended,
With more intelligence endu'd my mind.

"One morning, early, when from my abode 1035
I gaz'd upon the altar, I perceiv'd

l. 1017, 18.—Alluding to what the angel had said, (*l.* 879, 80,) and to what they had now lately experienced from the severity of winter.

Heav'n's flame thereon.—Amid the twilight dim
It blaz'd, while, with his beams, the rising sun
The column gilded of ascending smoke!
Enraptur'd, to my wife I cried—'See, Eve, 1040
Behold the annivers'ry of the promise!
Now on the altar hath the sacred flame
Descended—let us instantly approach—
This day must be devoted to the Lord,
And ev'ry other labor cease.—I must, 1045
Obedient to the will of the Most High,
The youngest of our lambs destroy—choose thou
The sweetest flow'rs, the sacrifice to strew.'

"Accordingly I went, and soon selected
The youngest and the fairest of our flock. 1050
'Twas the first living creature I had kill'd;
And, ah! my children, what a dreadful sight!
I cannot tell you my sensations, when
About to slaughter the poor innocent!
My blood was chill'd with horror—my limbs shook—
I scarcely could retain the struggling victim; 1056
And, while it moan'd beneath my trembling hands,
My arm would doubtless have refus'd its office,
Had not th' express command of the Most High
Embolden'd it to give the fatal blow. 1060

Alas! when I beheld the quiv'ring limbs
Of the poor animal, my own too trembled!
When its convulsive movements by degrees
Grew fainter—when, at length, they ceas'd to beat,
And at my feet the victim lifeless lay, 1065
What terrible forebodings thrill'd my soul!
The bleeding lamb I on the altar plac'd,
While fragrant flow'rs your mother strew'd around.
We then before it knelt with holy awe,
And our most grateful praises and thanksgivings 1070
Strait offer'd up to the Almighty, who
His promises so graciously remember'd.
At length, the flame the sacrifice consum'd;
Then, suddenly expiring, all around
An aromatic odour it diffus'd. 1075

"This solemn day of reconciliation
Had not been celebrated long, when I,
At sun-set, was returning from my toil
To seek repose with my beloved wife.
The hill I soon ascended; but in vain 1080
I sought her in the hut, and in the bow'r.
I anxiously look'd round—at length, I found her,
Pale and exhausted, seated near the stream,
With thee, my first-born, lying on her bosom!

The pains of child-birth had o'ertak'n her here, 1085
While at her wonted task she was engag'd.
Thy infant face, O Cain, with tears of joy
Bedew'd she, and with smiles, as I approach'd,
Saluted me as father of mankind.

'The Lord,' she said, 'the Lord hath, in my pains,
Been my support.—I've now brought forth a son, 1091
And call'd him Cain, as soon as I beheld him.
My dear first-born! how graciously hath God
Upon thy birth look'd down—may thy days then
Be dedicated ever to his praise! 1095
How weak—how helpless, he that's born of woman!
But may'st thou, like the op'ning flow'rs of spring,
Dear infant, flourish! Oh! may all thy life
Be like an incense offer'd up to God!'

"My eyes with tears of joy were also fill'd. 1100
I, in my arms, now gently took thee, Cain,
For the first time, and, turning round to Eve,
Saluted her as mother of mankind.
'Bless'd be the Lord,' I ardently exclaim'd,

l. 1089 and 1103.—In the original these lines are given as quotations—"I salute thee, father of men."—"I salute thee, mother of men."—The present deviations were merely for the sake of harmony.

'Who gave thee succour in the hour of travail! 1105
Thee I salute, thou first of human beings,
Who hast with pain been of a woman born:
Thee I salute, thou first of mankind, who
Hast enter'd life—by death to leave it soon!
Vouchsafe, O Lord, to look down from above, 1110
And this thy feeble creature to regard
With pity.—On the morning of his days,
I pray thee, shed thy influence benign!
Mine the delightful task shall be t' impress
With all the wonders of thy love and grace, 1115
His youthful mind—each morning and each ev'ning
His infant lips thy praise shall learn to sound.

'Yes, dearest Eve, mother of men!' I cried,
In accents of enthusiastic joy,
'Thus shall thy children and thy children's children
Around thee flourish, and around thee throng! 1121
Yon myrtle solitary stood like thee;
But now, behold, from the maternal stem
A race of tender suckers have sprung up:
As oft as Spring her verdant charms renew'd, 1125
Around her early offspring smil'd another;
And, by her progeny surrounded thus,
This parent-tree now forms a fragrant grove!

Thus, my dear Eve, (and may the pleasing prospect
Console thee for the pangs thou must endure,) 1130
Thus round this hill shall multiply our children;
Then from this eminence shall we survey
Their habitations spreading o'er the plains;
Then shall we see, provided death's approach
So long be distant—we shall see them all 1135
Afford each other mutual assistance,
And, like th' industrious bees, toil to procure
The necessaries and the sweets of life!
Oft from this hill shall we descend to visit
Our children's children in their peaceful dwellings;
Oft shall we tell, beneath their fruitful shades, 1141
The wonders of the Lord, that, thus encourag'd,
Their gratitude and virtue may excel.
We shall participate in all their joys—
In all their griefs advise and sympathize. 1145
Then, from the summit of this hill, shall we
Behold a thousand altars smoke around!
Th' ascending incense shall in sacred clouds
Envelop us; and, thro' them, shall arise
Our supplications for the human race! 1150
Then, when the solemn festival shall come
Of reconciliation—when Heav'n's flame
On the first sacred altar shall descend,

Our offspring shall assemble on this hill—
Th' accustom'd sacrifice we'll offer up, 1155
And, in the midst of an extended circle
Of prostrate worshippers, with holy joy
The fruit of our own loins we shall behold.'

"Thus I anticipated sweet delights;
And, while my heart with soft emotions glow'd, 1160
With warm affection, O my son, I kiss'd
Thy infant cheek—thy mother's feeble arms
Receiv'd thee then, while from the grassy turf
I tenderly assisted her to rise,
And, thus supporting, led her to our hut. 1165

"Thy little limbs in a short time acquir'd
Strength and activity—now harmless joy
Beam'd from thine eyes, and smiling gaiety
Play'd on thy cheeks—already thou wast able
To sport with tender feet among the flow'rs, 1170
Or on the grass—thy little lips already
Began to lisp thy infant thoughts, when, lo!
Mahala, my beloved, then was born.
Thou didst with joy play round the little stranger,
Didst kiss, and cover her with new-blown flow'rs:
Then, Abel, thou into the world didst come; 1176

And Thirza afterwards, thy dearest wife.
With what delight—what rapture, we beheld
Your youthful sports and innocent pursuits.
But, oh! that rapture, that delight, increas'd 1180
With your increasing years, when we perceiv'd
Your tender minds begin t' unfold their pow'rs,
And gradually maturity attain.
Then with solicitude—with anxious care,
Those mental pow'rs to cultivate we strove— 1185
To guard your passions—to direct your thoughts
To worthy objects—to preserve your souls
From the pernicious influence of vice,
That, like the flow'rs of spring, combin'd by art,
And render'd thus an odorif'rous group, 1190
Your lives might flourish long, and all around
The sweets of virtue mutually diffuse!
For, ah! while infants, prattling on my knee,
Or sporting with each other in the grove,
The mind I saw of man, brought forth in sin, 1195
Had need of cultivation, like the earth,
Which for our disobedience had been curs'd.
I saw, that constant vigilance and care
Are necessary to eradicate
The weeds of vile corruption—to preserve 1200
The pliant heart from the unruly passions—

To teach the young idea how to shoot,
And in the paths of virtue train up youth.
This is a task—a task which loudly calls
For all a teacher's art—a parent's love! 1205

"Now, my beloved children, with delight
I see you at maturity arriv'd,
Like tender shrubs grown up to fruitful trees!
Prais'd be the Lord for all his tender mercies—
For all his goodness undeserv'd!—May love, 1210
Pure gratitude, and true devotion, keep
Continual possession of your minds;
And may the blessing and the grace of God
For ever on your habitations rest!"

Here Adam ceas'd, and silence now prevail'd. 1215

The gentle youth and his new-wedded fair,
Thus, when grey morning first begins to dawn,
Walk out to hear the tuneful bird of night—
The strains of the sweet warbler, which alone
The universal silence interrupt, 1220
Accord so with their feelings, that their eyes
Are with the tears of tender transport fill'd,
Long after she her melody declines.

Th' enraptur'd pair to listen still remain,
In eager expectation more to hear— 1225
So, when the father ceas'd to speak, his children
In mute attention for some time continued.
The various scenes his narrative contain'd
Had in their minds various emotions caus'd.
How many times the tear of sympathy 1230
Bedew'd their pallid cheek—how often too
The smile of joy play'd on their countenance!
All to the father of mankind return'd
Their grateful thanks—Cain also render'd his—
But he, alone, had neither wept nor smil'd. 1235

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.

CANTO THE THIRD.

ARGUMENT.

Their departure from the bower—Joy of Abel and Thirza—Conversation of Cain and Mahala—The discontent and reproaches of the former, and the advice of the latter—Character of Anamelech—His malignant design, and journey from hell to earth—His remarks on man—His resolution to make Cain the instrument for executing his intention—Sudden indisposition of Adam—Affliction of Eve—Adam visited by his children—His address to his family—His children leave him, in hopes that he may find repose—Adam's meditations and gentle slumber—Eve's sorrow and prayer while sitting by the side of her sick husband—Cain's anxiety—Abel's supplication to Heaven for his father's recovery—An angel appears to him, and gives him healing flowers and herbs to administer to Adam—Abel, with eagerness, prepares the salutary draught, and brings it to his father—Adam blesses Abel, and Eve and her daughters embrace him—Cain's return to his father—He is informed of the success of his brother's prayer, and the consequent recovery of his father—Cain asks for a blessing, and receives it—His immediate retirement, and envy of Abel—Adam goes with his wife and daughters to the bower, and returns thanks to God for the restoration of his health—Cain and Abel see him on his knees—The latter proposes to his brother to offer sacrifices on the occasion—Cain's observations—Abel's remonstrances and concern for his brother's wayward disposition—Acceptance of Abel's sacrifice—Wrath of Heaven against Cain—His alarm and soliloquy.

THE

DEATH OF ABEL.

CANTO III.

Now broke they up, when the complacent Abel
Again his brother tenderly embrac'd.
The bow'r they quitted then; and, while the moon
Her gentle radiance shed around, all now
To their respective habitations hied. 5

"What rapture glows within me," Abel said,
While Thirza he affectionately press'd—
"No longer is my brother, my dear Cain,
From me estrang'd—he loves—he loves me still!
With what delight—what transport, I beheld 10

l. 10 to 12.—As Cain had neither wept nor smiled (*l.* 1235, Canto II.) during his father's narrative, the poet must here allude to the sudden tears of penitence which he shed when Abel and he first embraced, on their reconciliation, (*l.* 710, 727-8-9, Canto I.) and not to the farewell-embrace mentioned in this Canto (*l.* 2.) This is explained in Thirza's address to her husband (*l.* 29 to 37.)

His tears—the sweet effusions of affection,
Which fill'd his eyes, while folded in my arms!
Oh! not more grateful to the op'ning flow'rs
The dews of spring, than were those tears to me!
The storm, which rag'd within his soul, is still'd, 15
And peace and happiness are now restor'd!
Still in our humble cottages shall dwell
Content, to heighten all the sweets of life!
O thou, who, of thy boundless grace and mercy,
The first of th' human race preserv'dst from harm, 20
While they the solitary tenants were
Of this wide earth, keep, I beseech thee, keep
Th' unruly passions from my brother's breast!
Grant that the storm may never rage again;
But, like the present, be each future day 25
A day of gratitude, of joy, and peace!"

Now Thirza, while on her sweet countenance
Soft rapture play'd, embracing her belov'd,
Exclaim'd—"Not more refreshing to the fields,
When parch'd by Summer, is the gentle rain— 30
Nor more delightful to the lonely pair,
Who the first melancholy winter pass'd,
Was the return of spring, than were to me
The tears of reconciliation, which

Thy brother's checks bedew'd!—Oh, happy hour! 35
So glad were our dear parents, that they seem'd
Restor'd to all the gaiety of youth—
Joy sat on ev'ry face; and Nature's self
With more than usual beauty smil'd around.
Ev'n now, thou silent moon, thy beams, methinks, 40
Are far more mild and soothing than before."
Impress'd with all those sweet sensations, which
Had fill'd with transport her dear Abel's heart
She thus pour'd forth th' effusions of her joy.

Meanwhile, accompanied by his betroth'd, 45
The sullen Cain proceeded towards his home.
Mahala, as with tenderness she gaz'd,
Perceiving that the gloom of discontent
Still overspread his brow, press'd to her lips
His hand, and thus affectionately said— 50

"Why is my dearest Cain, amid such pleasure,
Apparently dejected and reserv'd?
How is it the tranquillity, which late
Has to thy tortur'd bosom been restor'd,
Imparts no animation to thine eyes, 55
Nor makes thy features more serene and gay?
'Tis true, thy manly spirit cannot bear

T' indulge in the expressions of delight,
Which silently thy heart enjoys; but, ah!
We thought, that this habitual reserve 60
Had render'd thee insensible of bliss,
Till thy fraternal love and tenderness,
When folded in thy brother's fond embrace,
With ecstacy—with transport, we beheld!
For, oh! on ev'ry cheek what rapture play'd— 65
From ev'ry eye what satisfaction beam'd!
Then the Almighty bless'd thee from above;
Then hov'ring angels witness'd with delight
The soft sensations, which o'erflow'd thy heart!
O my beloved, suffer me, I pray, 70
By all the fond solicitude I feel,
By all th' affection that my heart subdues,
Oh suffer me to press thee to my bosom,
And may my love awaken thee to joy—
May all thy cares within my arms be lost!" 75

This said, she clasp'd him to her throbbing breast;
When Cain forthwith, tho' he resisted not
His wife's embrace, indignantly rejoin'd—

l. 77-8.—In Shoberl's translation we read, "Cain returned the embrace," which is neither consonant with his succeeding speech, (*l.* 88, 91,) nor characteristic of his rugged disposition.—We must suppose he *received*,

"I am offended—yes—I am, indeed—
At your excessive joy I am displeas'd. 80
What! doth it not imply, *Cain now repents—*
He hitherto has been a wicked man—
He hated his dear brother? How absurd!
Whence could such strange ideas have arisen?
Why set it down I was a wicked man? 85
Why hastily conclude I hated Abel?
Because, forsooth! I met him not with tears,
Nor loaded him with womanish caresses?
I never hated him—no—on my life!
But I was griev'd—griev'd to the soul, to see 90
How he, by his effeminate soft ways,
Stole from me my dear parents' hearts. O Heav'n!
Could I with cold indifference see this?
Alas! Mahala, not without a cause
Doth care hang on my brow. Oh! how unwise— 95
How very great th' imprudence of my father,
To tell the story of his shameful fall,
And all the consequent calamities!

but did not *return*, the present caresses of his wife; otherwise the whole effect of that *voluntary* embrace, (the poetical beauty of which is taken notice of by Mr. Shoberl, in a note,) where the tears and remonstrances of Mahala move his obdurate heart, (*l.* 143 and 146,) would be entirely lost. Indeed, our translators vary considerably, not only in the present speech, but in the preceding one (*l.* 51, &c.)

Why should we know—why be so often told,
That thro' the disobedience of our parents 100
We the delights of Paradise have lost—
That we to wretchedness on their account
Are doom'd?—Were we still ignorant of this,
We should the load of misery endure
More patiently—Were we unconscious still 105
Of all th' enjoyments forfeited by them,
We never should in vain their loss regret."

Mahala, now endeav'ring to repress
The gushing tear, watch'd well her husband's looks,
To see if she might venture a reply, 110
And with much tenderness address'd him thus—

"Alas! from weeping I cannot refrain—
Then bear my tears; and let me, my belov'd,
Implore thee, for thyself, not to permit
The scatter'd clouds of discontent again 115
To gather o'er thy head. I know, dear Cain,
Thou canst disperse them—thou canst still preserve
Serenity and peace—then give not way
To gloomy thoughts, whereby the very things,
Which ought to lead to the due contemplation 120
Of the benignity and grace of God,

Become the sources of despair and grief!
O Cain! reproach not our indulgent parents
For candidly disclosing all the wonders
Jehovah hath perform'd for fallen man: 125
Their motive was t' excite within our hearts
Warm gratitude and humble confidence.
What! cou'dst thou with our misery reproach
A tender father—a fond mother, who,
Whene'er the tear of sorrow fills our eye, 130
Evince the utmost pity and concern—
Whene'er by our emotions we express
Or pain or grief, feel anguish the most keen?
Subdue, O my beloved, pray subdue
This threat'ning apathy—permit it not 135
To take possession of thy heart—t' obscure
Thy days and ours with melancholy gloom."

She ceas'd—and, raising now her tearful eyes,
Gaz'd tenderly on Cain—a smile of love
Then temper'd the moroseness of his brow. 140

"I will, my dear Mahala," he rejoin'd,
"I will this threat'ning apathy subdue—

l. 137 and 145.—"And *ours*"—"*Your* days."—Mahala speaks for her parents as well as for herself—*their* days are therefore included.

Come to my arms—it never to my heart
Shall find access—it never shall obscure
Your days and mine with melancholy gloom!" 145
He said, and fervently embrac'd his wife.

In the mean time, Anamelech (so nam'd
Was he in hell) Cain's conduct had observ'd,
And with malicious joy had also seen
That envy and resentment lurk'd within 150
His rankled heart. Tho' a malignant fiend
Of the inferior class, yet he, in pride,
Aye, and ambition, equal was to Satan,
That arch-apostate—Many a time, indeed,
From his despis'd associates he withdrew; 155
And many a time in solitude remain'd,
Where the infected streams of sulphur crept
Thro' the parch'd land, between enormous rocks,
Whose black and smoking summits were conceal'd
In stormy clouds—The dread reflection, which 160
The flames that blaz'd beyond the mountains, threw
Upon the clouds, now o'er his gloomy path
A dusky twilight shed, while he, in secret,
At his ignoble indolence repin'd.
For when the king of hell, flush'd with success, 165
On his return from Paradise, had boasted,

Amid tumultuous shouts of joy and triumph,
His vict'ry o'er the first-created pair—
When, from his throne, he proudly had related—
And the congratulations had receiv'd 170
Of all the hellish crew—how he had forc'd
The King of Heav'n to utter the decree
Of death and misery—then—then it was,
That the black poison of corroding envy
The bosom of Anamelech inflam'd. 175

"What!" to himself he said, "shall only he
And the proud sycophants around his throne
Enjoy all the applause and honor here,
While I, unnotic'd, am decreed to rove
Thro' these dark regions in obscurity, 180
Or am among the wretched gang confounded,
Who aggrandize him with their servile shouts?
No! I will prove myself as great as he—
By noble daring I'll astonish Hell;
And the great Satan, like the lowest fiend, 185
My name shall mention with profound respect."

Thus ruminated he in solitude,
And, nourishing in his envenom'd heart
A rooted hatred of mankind, devis'd

Malignant schemes to desolate the earth, 190
And to devote to misery and ruin
The human race. These executed he
With such success, that ev'n the pow'rs of hell
His name with horror heard.——He—he it was,
Who, in a later age, by artful means, 195
A ruthless king excited to destroy
The babes of Bethlehem—he, smiling, saw
Men, devils-like, with unrelenting rage
The helpless victims dash against the walls,
Then dripping with their blood--he, smiling, saw 200
The hellish agents plunge their reeking swords
Into their tender breasts, while in the arms
Of their disconsolate, distracted, mothers!
Proud and exulting, hover'd he then o'er
The lofty pinnacles of Bethlehem, 205
And, as he listen'd with infernal joy,
The moans of the expiring innocents—
The lamentations—the heart-rending cries

l. 194 to 218.—Matthew, ch. xi. v. 16. The poet makes mention of this circumstance as illustrative of the infernal disposition of Anamelech; but, in a poem, as well as in a drama, the time of action should be scrupulously adhered to; consequently, the introduction of an event which took place *so many ages* after the death of Abel, is exceedingly improper. Had Milton, in the delineation of Satan, in "Paradise Lost," been guilty of such a digression, we might then have had Satan's part, in "Paradise Regained," blended therewith.

Of their afflicted parents—were to him
Melodious sounds! The mutilated limbs 210
Of the now-mangled infants, scatter'd round
And trampled by their murd'rers under foot,
Appear'd to him a most delightful scene!
With a malicious transport he beheld
The fathers—mothers, prostrate on the earth, 215
Who, while the fate of their dear offspring they,
In all the bitterness of anguish, mourn'd,
Were with the blood of innocence distain'd.

While thus, within his gloomy mind, the deeds
Of Hell's fell monarch this relentless fiend 220
Weigh'd o'er and o'er, impatient of delay,
"I will arise," he cried—"yes, to the earth
I will ascend—I speedily will learn
The import of the sentence—*man shall die!*
My glory be it to promote his doom, 225
And his destruction to accelerate!"

Then, the infernal portals passing thro'
With hasty steps, he trod the very path,
Which Satan first had trac'd thro' Ancient Night,
And the rude empire of disorder'd Chaos. 230
Behold! as when a corsair, with full sail,

l. 230.—Quem dixêre *Chaos*—rudis, indigestaque moles.——Ovid

Which has for depredation been equipp'd,
Steers thro' the wide-extended ocean, till
At night arriving on Hesperia's coasts,
The tranquil natives of some peaceful village 235
Are by the pirates suddenly surpris'd,
Who seize and carry off their active youths,
While fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, wives,
Distracted, from the shore, with tearful eyes
The unrelenting ravishers pursue, 240
Till, by their out-spread sails, the flying bark
Gradually lessens to their aching sight:—
Ev'n so Anamelech, with rapid pace,
Thro' Night's dark empire long his course continu'd,
Till he the frontiers of the New Creation 245
Attain'd, and from th' exterior orbs beheld
A gleaming light. As the vile criminal,
Who meditating murder, hastes along
To execute his infamous intent;
But when at the metropolis arriv'd, 250
Which haply lies before him in a plain,
Illum'd by a variety of lamps,
He cautiously retreats, and by degrees
Approaches, anxious to avoid the light —
Ev'n so Anamelech with equal dread 255
Travers'd the regions of created space.

The earth thus having found, his piercing eyes
Discover'd soon the residence of man,
And in a shady grove alighted he.

"Here then," said he, "is man's abode, and this—
This is the earth by the Almighty curs'd— 261
Unlike, indeed, the blissful Eden, which
He once inhabited.——Delightful spot!
Approximating ev'n the very Heav'ns—
For, as I hover'd o'er the earth, I saw— 265
Yes—at a distance saw this Paradise,
That's now defended by a flaming sword!
This man has lost—for ever lost.—What then?
The earth, which he enjoys, is not a Hell!
Perhaps, by abject pray'rs, he has appeas'd 270
His anger'd God—perhaps, his coarser frame
Is subject to infirmities and pains,
Which to etherial spirits are unknown;
For I—I cou'd be happy here, methinks,
Did I not bear a hell within my bosom. 275
But 'mong these shades I see celestial spirits
Plac'd here, no doubt, as guardians of mankind—
Their vigilance with care I must elude,
Or they my undertakings may defeat—
Then, by th' abortion of my projects, I, 280

Instead of th' admiration, should become
The sport of Satan and his parasites.
Ha! now—now, on yon hill do I behold,
The family of sinners—sinners!——Why,
They do not miserable seem—perhaps, 285
Their misery commences but with death.
Mine be the task to ascertain their fate—
T' accelerate the evils that await them!
I'll tempt them to such deeds—for it appears
Their yielding hearts are open to seduction; 290
And if the first-created of their race,
While pure and undefil'd, the king of hell
Cou'd by a simple artifice corrupt;
Sure, in their present state of degradation,
While lab'ring under their Creator's curse, 295
How much more ready they must be to err—
How much more easy to be led astray!
Yes! I will tempt them to such flagrant deeds,
That their celestial guardians shall forsake
This earth with horror, and that God himself, 300
Who into being call'd them forth from nothing,
Shall, with his thunder, the base progeny
Annihilate, or into hell's abyss
Precipitate them—then, with shouts of joy,
From the black burning shores shall we behold 305

These favorites—the race of this new world
Struggling in vain amidst sulphureous flames,
And venting imprecations on themselves!
Ha! in yon field stands one of them, whose brow
The marks of sullen discontent betrays. 310
If I may credit his ferocious looks,
He, for the execution of my will,
A proper instrument may prove. Behold!
His partner weeps—the cause of these her tears
I needs must know. Yes! I'll approach him strait—
I'll learn his disposition and his thoughts." 316

O'er Cain and o'er his wife, to human sight
Invisible, had this malignant fiend,
Intent on deeds of evil, hover'd long—
Their conversation he had overheard— 320
And scarcely they their hut had enter'd, when
He stopp'd—he mark'd the place—then, with a sneer,
Maliciously repeated he their words:—

l. 319—327.—Alluding to the conversation between Cain and Mahala, (*l.* 51 to 145). The poet deviates from the time of action in order to describe the character of Anamelech. We are, therefore, to suppose, that the evil spirit is a witness of Cain's discontent at the very time that Mahala is persuading her husband to resist it; consequently *l.* 47, 48, 49, and *l.* 309, 310, are actions which take place at once.—Of course, *l.* 321 immediately follows *l.* 146. This interruption could have been remedied, had the poet introduced the character of Anamelech previous to the conversation between Cain and Mahala.

"Subdue this threat'ning apathy—subdue
Returning discontent—permit it not 325
To take possession of thy heart—to spread
O'er all thy days a melancholy gloom."

He paus'd—then added with vindictive spleen—

"No! whatsoever's good shall ne'er take root
In that ungrateful soil—I will destroy it! 330
And all those clouds of discontent, which now
Thou'dst fain disperse, shall o'er thy head again
Collected be as thick—aye, and as dark
As those, which in impenetrable gloom
The summits of th' infernal mountains shroud. 335
The task, indeed, is easy—for, methinks,
To gather them thou strivest hard thyself—
Well, I have only to assist thee then—
Delightful work! Yes, trust me, I will help
With joy t' accumulate them o'er thy brows— 340
New misery—unheard-of wretchedness
Shall overwhelm mankind!—Thy future days
Shall be with horror and with darkness fill'd,
Black as the night on which no morning dawns,
And thou the torments of a hell shalt share!" 345

Again the lovely morning sun began
To shine, inspiring cheerfulness and joy—
His implements of husbandry Cain took,
And to the field was hast'ning. Abel had
Already hail'd him with a fond salute, 350
And to the dewy mead his flock was leading;
While, hand in hand, appear'd their sister-wives,
Who were about to visit, as before,
The garden, which enclos'd the holy altar.
Beholding their dear brothers on the way, 355
They stopp'd, and their congratulations paid;
When lo! with a dejected countenance,
Their mother Eve her habitation left.
All, with solicitude and deep concern,
Approach'd the mourner, to enquire the cause 360
Of her apparent sorrow and alarm—
"Why dost thou weep?" they with emotion cried.
This question added to her tears—and now
In copious streams they fell; while she on each
Affectionately cast her wat'ry eyes, 365
And thus, in broken accents, spoke her grief—

"Ah! did you not, my dearest children, hear
The piercing groans, which issued from our dwelling?
Alas! your father, in the night, was seiz'd

With pains the most tremendous and acute; 370
Ev'n now he struggles with some grievous ache,
Which penetrates his very bones—in vain
His anguish he endeavours to conceal—
In vain he labors to restrain the sighs,
Which from his tortur'd bosom force their way. 375
He stifles all complaints—nay, strives, indeed,
With words of comfort to divert my sorrow.
But, ah! my children, vain all comfort now;
Oppress'd with grief of the most poignant kind,
My heart no consolation can admit. 380
When, without sighing, he lies still, alas!
He seems in serious contemplation lost;
Then with his agony he sadly moans—
Cold damps bedew his face; and, from his eyes,
The tears he had repress'd in torrents burst! 385
Ah! dark forebodings—dreadful apprehensions
Shake my distracted soul! Oh, my dear children,
Support—support your wretched mother pray,
And let's to your afflicted father haste."

Now on Mahala's shoulder she reclin'd, 390
And, by the mournful train accompanied,
The weeping matron to her home return'd.

With sympathetic sorrow they all stood
'Round Adam's couch—more tranquil he appear'd.
His looks—his manners prov'd, that, spite of all 395
Th' excruciating pangs his body felt,
His soul was still superior to his pains.
On his surrounding offspring now he cast
A look of tenderness—a smile of love—
Then said—"My dear beloved children, see, 400
The hand of the Almighty hath brought on
These grievous pains which tear my very vitals:
But blessed be his holy name—for he,
By his unerring wisdom, all things governs!
If 't be his pleasure to dissolve those bands 405
Which to this mortal frame unite my soul—
And if it be his will that this frail body
Shou'd now be mingled with its native dust—
Devoutly I submit to the decree,
And will, in my expiring moments, praise 410
The Lord—the Sovereign of life and death!
Deliver'd from a body vile, accurs'd—

l. 397.—Mrs. Collyer and Mr. Shoberl have translated it thus—"His soul was *master* of *itself*," which is incorrect, when we consider, that *soul* is neither the masculine nor neuter gender; yet the application of the feminine, in this instance, (*mistress* of *herself*,) would appear inconsistent. In order, therefore, to unite accuracy and consistency, the gender is here artfully avoided, as it always should be in instances of this kind.

My soul shall, in more elevated strains,
Then offer praises to his holy name!
Oh! God of consolation, with what hopes— 415
What cheering hopes, dost thou encourage man!
Yes, it is just that I should be the first
To render to its parent earth my dust—
Support me, O my God—support me still—
And, in the hope of future bliss, oh! teach me 420
With patience to endure my present pain!
Ah! leave me not—forsake me not, I pray—
Now, in the awful hour of dissolution,
When the last tremor thrills my mortal frame!"

His languid eyes then cast he on his wife, 425
Who still stood weeping at his side—"Oh! why,"
Continued Adam—" Why these lamentations?
Thou, Eve, whom as myself I love—and you,
My dearest children, add not to my anguish
By this excessive, unavailing grief.— 430
Ah! cease your tears—how cruel!—they distress me!
Perhaps these pains are merely the effects
Of gradual decay—death may be distant;
Perhaps th' Almighty may restore my strength,
And I on earth again taste joy and gladness. 435
We must await, with holy resignation,

The will of Heav'n, whatever it may be.
By due reflections we should be prepar'd
To meet the worst. Consider what we are,
Nor sink beneath a load of useless grief; 440
Tho' it please God that we should part for ever,
And that my soul should quit this vest of clay!"

He paus'd—his pains return'd—his cheeks
With tears were overflow'd, while he beheld
His weeping family with mute attention. 445
On each his eyes successively were fix'd;
But longest, and with most concern, on Eve,
Whose strong emotions spoke her deep distress.

"Alas!" resum'd the father of mankind,
"The death of the first sinner must, indeed, 450
Be to spectators a terrific scene;
But far more dreadful to the sinner's self!
May God—our gracious God, who never yet
Abandon'd us when wretched and forlorn,
May he support me in the trying hour, 455
And be your help—your succour, when I'm gone!
He will—he will—yes, let us not despond;
For his past mercies authorise our hopes.
Go then, dear children, for your father pray—

In the mean time I'll seek a little rest, 460
For sleep may my enfeebled limbs refresh."

Now Adam ceas'd—his weeping children stoop'd
To kiss his trembling hand—" Yes," they exclaim'd,
" We'll go, dear father, and, in thy behalf,
Our ardent supplications offer up. 465
May balmy slumbers come to thy relief,
May they restore thy now-exhausted strength!
Oh! may the Lord accept our fervent pray'rs;
May he, while gentle sleep thy senses lulls,
Remove the pains with which thou art afflicted, 470
That thou to health and happiness may'st 'wake!"

Suppressing now the grief which pierc'd their hearts,
Their father's cot they left—Eve only staid.

" Fain wou'd I sleep," said Adam to his wife,
Who sat, suffus'd in tears, beside his couch. 475
" Oh! weep not, thou dear object of my love,
Or thy mistaken tenderness will add
To these my pains; which, if increas'd, may chase
That rest which I so earnestly desire."

Now with the bear-skins, which compos'd his bed,

His face he cover'd; anxious to conceal 481
From Eve the anguish which his mind disturb'd.

"Is this," thought he, "is this the awful hour?
I fear it is—how dreadful the idea!
Forsake not, Lord, in the last agony, 485
Forsake not an expiring sinner!—Ah!
Tho' death so very terrible appear,
Yet were it in still greater terrors cloth'd,
How sweet would be the consolation, if
My death were the sole consequence of sin; 490
And if my sufferings, however great,
Cou'd from the like my wretched race exempt—
But no—oh no!—o'er all of woman born
This awful gloom—these horrors must extend!—
For what from my polluted loins can issue 495
But sinners—sinners, who, like me, must die?
Yes, all to whom existence I may give,
I also shall destroy; for they, like me,
Shall from the objects of their love be torn—
Be torn, like me, from all those tender ties, 500
Which render life delectable and sweet!
Oh! my beloved Eve, how wilt thou weep—
How o'er my senseless clay wilt thou bewail!—
Alas! tremendous, agonizing thought!

Sure my inanimate remains must tremble 505
When the poor orphans, left without support,
Bewail the death of an indulgent father—
When helpless parents grieve at having lost
An only son—the staff of their old age—
When the fond brother his dear sister mourns— 510
The wife her husband—or, with frantic rage,
The love-sick fair the youth of her affection!
Ah! curse not, children—spare my memory—
Curse not my mould'ring dust. How just it is
The hour of death terrific should appear— 515
Yes—just, indeed, that we should feel the weight
Of the Almighty's curse in our last moments—
Those moments when we leave a life of sin;
For death will liberate us from a state
Of malediction; and, if we've essay'd, 520
During our degradation, to act well,
Then death, no longer awful, will convey
Our souls to regions of eternal bliss!—

l. 505 to 512.—Hitherto Adam and Eve entertained very imperfect notions of death, See Canto II. *l.* 195 to 197. By the incident of the birds, in the same Canto, *l.* 384 to 422, these notions were in some degree rectified; they then foresaw the separation of husbands and wives, of parents, and children: but how should Adam, who still supposes that he is the first doomed to die, being the oldest man, and that in the course of time Eve should follow him—how should he foresee the death of children before their parents, the separation of brothers and sisters, and of affectionate lovers? Our poet is certainly inconsistent here.

Ah! curse not, then, my children, spare my dust!
This our abode on earth is not existence— 525
No—'tis a taste of life—a restless dream!
Be then dispers'd, ye clouds, which throw a gloom
Over my soul—By dying I shall live!
Come then, that glorious life, when I with joy
Will wait my dying children to receive 530
With all the fondness of a father, who,
Having the first, on a fine morn, awak'd,
Enjoys the cheering rays of the bright sun,
'Till the dear objects of his tender love
Rise from their beds, and rush into his arms." 535

Thus meditated Adam—and, at length,
A gentle slumber stole upon his senses,
And with it brought tranquillity and ease.

Meanwhile, the weeping Eve dejected sat,
Still watching Adam, and, in whisp'ring voice, 540
(Unwilling to disturb her husband's rest,)
Thus vented she the anguish of her heart—

"How many cares do I experience now!—
On me—on me, who was the first offender,
O Curse, thou dreadful consequence of sin, 545

Let fall a double portion of thy evils!
All the distress, the agonizing pains,
Which the dear objects of my love endure,
I brought—for it was I who first transgress'd. 549
These pain —these sorrows, are like gnawing worms
Which prey upon my heart!—Ah! my dear husband,
If now thou die——I tremble at the thought—
What horror chills my blood—how the cold drops
Steal down my face—Oh! can the pangs of death
Be more severe—more dreadful? My belov'd, 555
If I, who have involv'd thee in thy ruin,
Be doom'd to witness thy expiring moments,
Ah! cast not on me an upbraiding look!—
My children, curse not your unhappy mother!
Tho' guilty, she's entitled to your pity! 560
'Tis true, indeed, no murmurs have as yet
Escap'd your lips; but, is not ev'ry sigh
Which heaves your bosom—is not ev'ry tear
Which wets your cheek, to me a keen reproach?
O God! Almighty Father! condescend 565
To hear my earnest supplications—Grant
That my dear husband's sufferings may cease—
Remove the pains by which he is afflicted!
But if they are th' effects of death—oh! if—
Tremendous thought!—if to its native dust 570

His body must return—be merciful!
Oh! separate us not—let me die with him!
And, that I may not witness his last pangs,
Take my soul first, for I the first transgress'd."

She ceas'd—and still by her dear husband's couch
The weeping dame disconsolate remain'd. 575

'Spite of the roughness of his temper, Cain,
Mov'd by his father's anguish, had shed tears.
He to the fields repair'd; and, on the way,
His cheeks now dry, thus to himself he said— 580

"As by my father's couch I trembling stood,
From weeping I could not refrain. His sighs—
Yes, and his language, pierc'd my very soul?
I hope—I hope he will not die! O God!
Preserve the life of my beloved parent! 585
From weeping I could not refrain—but then,
I was not like my brother, drown'd in tears;
No, like th' effeminate, the gentle Abel,
To such soft tenderness I cannot melt—
But weep I did.——Well—will they still suppose 590
My disposition's sullen and perverse?
Or will they say, that Abel more than Cain

His father loves, for more than Cain he wept?
I love my father!——Yes—he is as dear
To me as to my brother, tho' like him 595
I cannot such abundant tears command."

Oppress'd with sorrow for a father's anguish,
The weeping Abel wander'd in the mead;
Then prostrate on the earth himself he cast.
The grass, in which he now conceal'd his face, 600
Was with his tears bedew'd, while to his God
With holy fervor he his prayer address'd:—

"Oh Thou, who with consummate wisdom deign'st
The destiny of mortals to conduct,
Accept the humble tribute of my praise! 605
To supplicate thy mercy I presume
In this my great distress, for thou'st permitted
Dejected sinners to relieve their hearts,
By pouring forth all their complaints to thee.
Sweet consolation, which thy goodness grants! 610
Alas! can I expect that, in compliance
With the entreaties of a wretched worm,
Thou the decrees of thine unerring wisdom
Shou'dst e'er reverse—hence the presumptive thought!
For wise and good thy dispensations all! 615

Thy will be done, O Lord!—I only pray
For strength—for fortitude t' endure our pain!
Thou know'st, O thou Omniscient! the desires—
Thou know'st the ardent wishes of our hearts.
Oh then, if these desires—these wishes seem 620
Good to thy wisdom, aid the indispos'd!
Restore to the afflicted wife, who now,
Disconsolate, beside her husband mourns—
Restore to her the partner of her days,
Who'as shared her ev'ry joy—her ev'ry sorrow, 625
In whom her life's bound up.—Restore to us,
His weeping children, a fond parent, whom
We dearly love.—Oh! if it be thy will,
Procrastinate his death—be it deferr'd
To a more distant period! Speak, O Lord, 630
And it is done! Command, his pains are gone!
Then, from the habitations of poor mortals,
To thee the glad effusions shall ascend
Of heart-felt gratitude—of holy rapture!
Oh! suffer him, from whom we life deriv'd, 635
Still longer with his offspring to remain!
Oh! let him live, that he may still declare
To us thy gracious mercies—let him live,
The children of his children to instruct
In lisping forth thy praise! But if, alas! 640

Thy wisdom hath ordain'd that now he die,
Forgive my tongue for faltering—my soul
For being so disquieted within me!
If my dear father now must die, Oh! pray
Support him in the dreadful trying hour! 645
Support us all! Oh! graciously forgive
Our lamentations—our excess of grief!
Forsake us not, O Lord, in our distress—
Impart thy consolations—let's not sink
Beneath affliction's weight, lest we offend 650
By our despair.—Impart thy consolation,
That, ev'n in this our misery, we may
The dispensations of thy wisdom praise."

Thus Abel pray'd—and, prostrate on the earth,
In deep humility he still remain'd. 655
At length, a rustling noise his ears assail'd,
While balmy odours all the air perfum'd.
He rais'd his head, and lo! before him stood
An angel with celestial beauty clad.
His brow a garland of sweet roses deck'd, 660
And, like the morning dawn, serene his smile!
In accents then, mild as the zephyrs' breath,
He said:—"Thy supplications have been heard,

P. W. Vandywell del. — I. Kennerley sculp.

"Receive, my friend, these healing flowers and herbs;
They salutary qualities possess."

CANTO III line 678.

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Graciously heard; for, by the Lord's command,
I this material form assume, to bring 665
The pray'd-for consolation and relief.
Th' Almighty, who incessantly attends
To all his creatures' wants, and who regards
The creeping worm and the empyrial seraph
With equal care, in mercy hath ordain'd, 670
That from the bosom of the earth should spring
Balsamic remedies for the complaints
Of her inhabitants, whose bodies now
(The dreadful consequence of disobedience)
Are subject to infirmities and pains— 675
To maladies and gradual corruption,
Which nature, since the fatal fall, inflicts!
Receive, my friend, these healing flow'rs and herbs;
They salutary qualities possess.
Go, boil them in pure water from the spring; 680
This done, administer the strength'ning draught,
And to thy suff'ring father health restore."

The angel gave him now the flow'rs and herbs;
Then vanish'd from his sight. The wond'ring Abel,
With transport fill'd, stood motionless awhile, 685
Till rous'd by gratitude he thus exclaim'd:—

"What am I, Lord—a sinner—dust and ashes!
That thou shouldst graciously regard my pray'r?
Fain wou'd I praise thy holy name—but how—
How can a mortal give thee thanks?—Can he 690
Sufficiently extol thy boundless goodness
Exceeding praise?—Can he record thy bounties
When ev'n the pow'rs of the immortal choirs
Are to the glorious task inadequate?
Yet thou hast deign'd—yes—mercifully deign'd, 695
To hear the supplications of a worm!"

Joy lent him wings—he to his dwelling flew,
And eagerly the beverage prepar'd;
Then to his father's habitation ran,
Where Eve, beside his couch, still weeping sat, 700
While Thirza and Mahala, on each side
Stood, overwhelm'd with their excessive grief.
The mother and her daughters, with surprise,
Saw Abel's haste—they, with astonishment,
Beheld the joy which sparkled in his eye, 705
And the sweet smile which sported on his cheek.

"Beloved mother—sisters"—he exclaim'd,
"Dry up the tears of sorrow—weep no more!
The Lord hath heard our pray'rs.—Oh! give him thanks;

For by his servant he hath sent relief! 710
To me an angel in the field appear'd,
Who gave me flow'rs and herbs of healing kind,
Which ev'n his own celestial hand had gather'd.
Boil these, said he, in water from the spring—
Administer the salutary draught, 715
And to your suff'ring father health restore."

With rapturous surprise these words they heard;
While gratitude and praise flow'd from their lips.
The aromatic potion Adam drank,
And soon experienc'd its divine effects. 720
Himself then raising, he, with fervent zeal,
To God his adorations offer'd up;
Then kindly taking Abel by the hand,
With tenderness he press'd it to his lips—
Bedew'd it with the tears of joy, and said— 725

"Blessed be thou, my son, by whom the Lord
Hath sent me comfort and relief—yes, thou,
Whose virtue is acceptable to him,
And to whose pray'r he graciously vouchsafes
To listen—O my son, blessed be thou!" 730

Eve and her daughters then embrac'd the youth,
Whom God had made the messenger of health.

During these fond endearments Cain appear'd—
With anxious apprehensions in the field
Tormented had he been, and to himself 735
Had said—" I to my father will return—
Perhaps his son's assistance he requires—
Perhaps he may expire, and from his lips
A parting blessing I shall not receive.
Ah me! I must return—I love my father!" 740
Accordingly he hasten'd from the plain,
And witness'd with astonishment the joy—
The love, with which his brother was caress'd.
Moreover, he the benediction heard,
Which Adam had on Abel just bestow'd. 745

Mahala joyfully her husband met,
And tenderly embracing him, explain'd
The strange event—" The Lord, O my belov'd,
Hath, by the hand of Abel, sent relief."

Then Adam's bed Cain instantly approach'd; 750
Dear father, I salute thee," he exclaim'd,
And kiss'd his hand—" Oh praised be our God,
For having thus restor'd thee to our arms!
But ah! hast thou no blessing left for me?
Thou'st blessed him—my brother—by whose hand 755

The Lord hath graciously assistance sent.
Bless me too, father—me—thy first-born—me!"

With fond affection Adam gaz'd on Cain,
And pressing tenderly his hand, he cried— 759

"Yes, bless'd be thou, my first-born, my dear son;
May peace and happiness reign in thy bosom,
And undisturb'd repose thy soul enjoy!"

Advancing then towards Abel, Cain his arms
Threw round his neck—how cou'd he otherwise?
'Twas courtesy, which cou'd not be avoided, 765
For all—all had embrac'd the gentle youth.

Cain left his father's hut, and forthwith sought
The dark recesses of a distant grove—
There to give vent to the tormenting thoughts,
Which occupied his gloomy mind. He paus'd, 770
And then repeated some of Adam's words—

"Peace! happiness! and undisturb'd repose!
How is it possible? Where can I find
This peace—this undisturb'd tranquillity?
Why, was I not oblig'd t' implore the blessing, 775

Which, unimplor'd, he tenderly bestow'd
On my more happy brother? True, indeed,
The first-born I!—a glorious privilege!—
Of what advantage this? Wretch that I am!
Grief's my inheritance—contempt my portion! 780
So, by the hands of Abel, God was pleas'd
To send relief—yes, by the hands of Abel!
He's always favor'd with the precious means
Of gaining a superior share of love,
While I, his elder brother, am rejected.— 785
Rejected!—well—who can regard the wretch,
Whom the Almighty disregards—whom angels,
The messengers of Heav'n, pass with contempt?
They heed not me—to me they ne'er appear!
While in the labors of the field, my strength 790
I daily spend—while, from my sun-burnt brow,
The sweat pours down, these guardians of mankind
Pass me unheeded, to discourse with him,
Whose delicate soft hands, unus'd to toil,
May be employ'd in sporting with the flow'rs, 795
Or who, beside his flock idly reclining,
May from excessive tenderness shed tears,
Because, forsooth! the setting sun then tinges
The clouds with crimson, or because the dew
Then glitters on the variegated herbage! 800

Oh misery! that I the first-born am!
On me—on me alone falls the whole weight
Of the Creator's malediction.——Ah!
Sweet favorite! for thee all nature smiles.
I only eat the bread of toil and sorrow— 805
I only pine—I only feel the curse!"

Such were the gloomy meditations, which,
Produc'd by hate and envy, fill'd his mind,
While in the grove he melancholy stray'd.

Behind the azure mountains was the sun 810
Retiring, and, as his departing rays
Were ling'ring on the summits of the hills,
They with a glowing crimson ting'd the clouds,
When Adam said—" Behold the setting sun!
I'll go into the harbour 'fore our hut, 815
And, ere the close of day, to the Most High
Will render thanks for this my convalescence."
Then, full of vigor, quitted he his couch,
And, follow'd by his wife and daughters, sought
The bow'r, which to his habitation led. 820

With the soft tints of the departing sun
The landscape glow'd, when Adam, kneeling down,
Beheld with rapture the delightful scene.

"Here, O Most High and Mighty!" he exclaim'd,
With fervent gratitude and zeal devout, 825
"Here, penetrated with a lively sense
Of thy amazing goodness, I again
Appear before thee! Agonizing pains,
Where are you now? Alas! you pierc'd my bones,
And, like the fire, consum'd my very vitals; 830
But, 'midst the violence of anguish, still
My soul confided in the Lord—he lent
A gracious ear to a poor sinner's pray'r—
He, from his everlasting throne, look'd down;
The pains then ceas'd, and genial health return'd! 835
Death shall not triumph yet!——No—I am spar'd!
Still in this mortal body shall I praise
Thee, my Creator!—Still fresh instances
Of thy transcendent mercy shall I see—
The mercy which to fallen man thou shewest! 840
Oh! I will praise thee, Lord, from early dawn
Until the rising of the ev'ning star!
Yes, while my soul retains her earthly body,
Th' effusions of my gratitude shall flow—
And when from this abode of clay my soul 845
Shall be releas'd—then, pure and undefil'd,
Triumphantly to thee shall she ascend,

To sing thy praise in more exalted strains—
To live for ever, and thy glory see!

"O ye resplendent angels, cast your eyes 850
On this abode of death, where mortals dwell—
This earth which trembled, and which lost her charms,
When sinners fell—when ye, celestial hosts,
Your faces from pollution turn'd away;
Yet now behold, it still displays the wonders 855
Of the Almighty's infinite compassion!
Look down—look down, ye angels! Oh attune
Your golden harps, and in seraphic strains
Exalt his name—for man, alas! weak man
Can only weep, and stammer forth his joy. 860

"Thou lovely sun, once more do I salute thee!
Thy morning beams, which darted from behind
The cedars, found me overcome with pain!
I then saluted them with groans and sighs,
As gradually my dwelling they illum'd. 865
Thy ev'ning rays, which glow from yonder hills,
Now find me on my knees before the Lord,
Who hath, ere thy departure, giv'n me ease,
And graciously restor'd my wonted strength.

"Ye lofty mountains and ye distant hills, 870
Which o'er the plain lie scatter'd, I salute you!
Again shall I behold your summits gilded
With the delightful radiance of the sun,
When rising and retiring!—O ye birds,
Whose notes are so harmonious, I salute you! 875
Again your songs shall charm my list'ning ear,
And wake me early to adore the Lord!

"Ye limpid streams! again your flow'ry banks
Shall ease my weary limbs, and your soft murmurs
Again shall sooth me to refreshing sleep. 880

"Ye groves, ye fragrant bow'rs, to your retreats
I shall again resort, whene'er my soul
To serious meditation I resign;
And, in the sultry hours, beneath your shade,
A grateful coolness shall again enjoy. 885

"O Nature—beauteous Nature, I once more
Salute thee!—Praise and thanksgivings be
To Nature's God, who hath remov'd my pain,
And kept my clay from sinking into dust!"

His grateful thanks the father of mankind 890
Thus render'd to the Lord.—In solemn silence

All Nature seem'd attentive to his pray'r;
And, on his ceasing, each surrounding object
Appear'd to welcome his return to life.
With his departing beams the glorious sun 895
Now, thro' the foliage of the arbor, hail'd him,
Then sank behind the mountain. Youthful zephyrs
Around him wafted, on ambrosial wings,
The aromatic perfumes of the flowers,
As if by them appointed all their sweets 900
To shed on him. The feather'd songsters too
Saluted him with their melodious strains,
And, as a token of their lively joy,
Continually among the branches hopp'd.

While Adam on his knees remain'd, came Cain 905
And Abel to the bow'r. They with delight
Beheld their father quite restor'd to health.
He from the earth arose; his eyes o'erflow'd
With tears of gratitude and joy, while he
Imprinted kisses on Eve's moisten'd cheek, 910
And warmly press'd his children to his bosom.

l. 900—901.—These lines are omitted in Shoberl's translation, though not only poetical, but explanatory of lines 893—894, the very flowers being here made to welcome Adam on his recovery.

Then to his habitation with his wife
And his transported daughters he return'd.

Now Abel thus address'd himself to Cain:—
"Oh my dear brother, how shall we express 915
Our gratitude to God, who has vouchsaf'd
To hear our supplications, and restore
To us a father loving and belov'd?
I, from my flock, the youngest lamb will take,
Which on my altar, by the moon's pale light, 920
(For she is rising now,) I to the Lord
Will offer up.—Wilt thou not, brother, go,
And also sacrifice to God on thine?"

The first-born cast on him a side-long glance,
And gloomily replied—"Yes, I will go, 925
And on my altar I'll an off'ring make
To God of what my barren fields afford."

With graceful sweetness Abel then rejoin'd—
"Oh Cain—dear brother, God doth not regard
The lamb, which 'fore him burns, or the field's produce,
Which is consum'd by the descending flame; 931
No, he regards the heart alone, which glows

With ardent piety—the heart of him,
Whose sacrifice proceeds from true devotion."

"The fire of Heav'n will doubtless," answer'd Cain,
"Thy victim soon devour; for 'twas by thee 935
The Lord convey'd assistance to our father.
I am despis'd—yes, I am overlook'd!
No matter—I will go and sacrifice.—
With lively gratitude for the relief, 940
Which our beloved parent has from God
Receiv'd, my bosom glows as well as thine,
For he to me is equally as dear!
Alas! with me—poor miserable worm!—
The Lord may deal according to his will." 945

Then Abel, tenderly embracing Cain,
Observ'd—"Ah! my dear brother, dost thou make
God's having sent assistance by my hand
Another cause of discontent? We all
For this assistance pray'd; and if the Lord 950
By me vouchsaf'd his mercy to convey,
Was't not in answer to the pray'rs of all?
O my dear brother, banish from thy breast
Vexatious thoughts—this gloominess subdue!
For be assur'd, dear Cain, th' Almighty, who 955

Th' inmost recesses of the heart beholds,
Can hear the slightest—the most secret murmur.
Ah brother, with the same unfeign'd affection
For thee I entertain, do thou love me!
Now go in peace, and sacrifice to God; 960
But, oh! let no impure unworthy passion
With thy devotion mingle—then the Lord
Will thy thanksgivings graciously accept,
And from his throne his blessings on thee shed."

Cain answer'd not, but to his field repair'd, 965
While after him the gentle Abel gaz'd
With deep concern; then to his meadow went.
Each reach'd his place of worship.—Abel slew
The fairest and the youngest of his lambs,
Which having on his altar laid, and strew'd 970
With fragrant flow'rs and aromatic herbs,
His sacrifice he kindled.—On his knees
Before th' oblation humbly then he fell,
And with unfeign'd devotion offer'd up
His tribute of thanksgiving to the Lord— 975
When lo! aloft, amid the gloom of night,

l. 974, &c.—See Gen. ch. iv. v. 4.—The cause of Cain and Abel's respective sacrifices is ingeniously invented by our poet; but it would have been better had he in *l.* 990 to 996 adhered to the words of scripture, *verses* 6, 7, which Milton, we find, on similar occasions, has always done.

The flame ascended, and illum'd the field!
Th' Almighty had enjoin'd the winds to cease,
And all was solemn stillness, for to Him
Acceptable was Abel's sacrifice. 980

In the mean time, Cain on his altar laid
The produce of his field—then to the same
Set fire and knelt, while darkness reign'd around:
But suddenly a loud terrific blast
Throughout the forest howl'd—the boist'rous winds
Dispers'd the off'ring, and in flame and smoke 986
The trembling Cain envelop'd.——He retired—
With terror he forsook the altar, when
An awful voice, which from the darkness issu'd,
Thus said—"Why tremblest thou?—Why on thy face
Is horror so imprinted?—Oh repent, 991
And be forgiv'n!--But if to trespass thou
Tenaciously persist, know that thy sin
A guilty conscience ever shall attend!
Why thus implacably thy brother hate, 995
Whose love for thee is ardent and sincere?"
Now ceas'd the voice—astonish'd and dismay'd
The place of sacrifice Cain quickly left,

l. 998.—"Cain retreated trembling from the altar," is what we read in Shoberl's copy, which he had already done, *l.* 986, even in his translation—"He retired trembling from the altar."

Pursu'd by its infected stifling smoke,
Which after him the whirlwind's fury drove! 1000
Then wand'ring thro' the gloom of night, his heart
Within him throbb'd—cold damps his limbs bedew'd:
When looking up, he, at a distance, saw
A column of bright flame, which, thro' the darkness,
From Abel's sacrifice aloft ascended. 1005
He turn'd his head aside—he gnash'd his teeth,
And, shudd'ring with despair, thus loudly cried—

"There—there ascends the darling's sacrifice!
I cannot bear the sight!—Another look
Wou'd Hell itself within my bosom kindle; 1010
And I should curse, no doubt—no doubt should curse,
With trembling lips and diabolic rage,
This favorite of Heav'n!—Wretch that I am!
Be all thy fury vented on thyself!
O death, where shall I find thee?—Come destruction,
And terminate at once my wretched life! 1016
O father—father, why that fatal lapse?
Why, mother, on thy offspring didst thou bring
This load of misery?—Ah! shall I now,
With fell despair imprinted on my face, 1020
Present myself before you, to expose
This my sore wretchedness, that you may feel

The weight of that ineffable affliction
Entail'd on all your miserable race?
No—no, unhappy man! endure thy grief— 1025
Oh! spare thy father. Were he to behold
My fallen countenance—my mark'd despair,
With horror seiz'd he wou'd, before my eyes,
Expire; and thus my anguish be encreas'd.
On me, the curse—the anger of the Lord, 1030
Fall heavy!—He has my sacrifice disdain'd.
Of all created beings on the earth
I the most wretched am!—The animals
Which prowl the field, the worms which crawl along,
Are to be envied when compar'd with me! 1035
O God—O God! if thou, who art all just,
Canst be to me so merciful, avert
The fierceness of thy wrath—or cut me off!
But, contumacious sinner that I am!
Has he not said—Repent and be forgiven? 1040
Has he not left it to my choice to have
Remission or eternal misery?
Ah! I have sinn'd—and my transgressions now
In judgment rise against me, and demand
Thy vengeance, God of justice! I have sinn'd! 1045
How just—how very just, then, thy displeasure!
The more we deviate from Virtue's path,

The deeper we in woe involve ourselves:
Then woe is me, for I indeed have stray'd!
I will forsake my evil ways—O Lord, 1050
Be those iniquities which now accuse me
For ever cancell'd—Oh! be merciful,
Preserve my soul from guilt—remove this load
Of wretchedness, or cut me off at once!

END OF THE THIRD CANTO.

CANTO THE FOURTH.

ARGUMENT.

Cain, affected by Mahala's nocturnal lamentations, starts from his couch, and quits his cottage—His agitation—He seeks repose beneath a bush that overhangs a rock—Anamelech lies by his side to disturb his imagination—A storm—Cain's consequent dream—Abel discovers him asleep, pale and agitated—Cain awakes—His imprecations—Abel's expostulations—Cain murders him—His remorse and terror—Anamelech's exultation—God commissions an archangel to convey the soul of Abel to Heaven—The meeting and mutual joy of the happy spirits—Abel's farewell to the earth—The congratulating hymn of the tutelary angels—Cain's despair—Michael, by God's appointment, appears to Cain in a gloomy cloud, and declares the sentence, which the Almighty has passed upon him—Cain's anguish and apprehensions—Adam and Eve walk out to enjoy the beauties of the morning—Eve's intended present for Cain, in hopes of removing his envy—She discovers the body of her murdered son—The lamentations of Adam and Eve—Cain's sudden appearance and confession of the murder—Horror of the parents—An angel descends, assures them of Abel's bliss, enjoins them to be comforted, and to inter the body of Abel in the earth—Resignation of Adam—His prayer for Cain—Accompanied by Eve, he bears away the body of his son.

THE

DEATH OF ABEL.

CANTO IV.

Still on the earth the dews of night descended—
The birds in silence slept—thick darkness still
The vale o'erspread, and on the mountain's brow
Pale twilight rested, when, with frantic rage,
Cain started from his couch, and left his hut! 5
His wife, unconscious sh' had been overheard,
Had wept incessantly the tedious night,
And rais'd with pious zeal to Heav'n her hands,
Imploring grace and mercy for a wretch,
Whose violent emotions had not 'scaped 10
The fond Mahala's penetrating eye.
Unwilling his short slumbers to disturb,
Her lively sorrow—her intense devotion

Were vented latterly in tears and sighs;
But still her supplications, half express'd, 15
The ears of Cain had reach'd.—He left his hut;
And now, amidst the silence of the night,
His murm'ring voice like distant thunder sounded.

"Oh hateful night!" he cried, "Tremendous hour!
What gloomy fears have overwhelm'd me!—What 20
Accumulated horrors seiz'd my soul!
When somewhat calm my thoughts—when frightful dreams
Ceas'd to torment me, then oblivious sleep
Might for a while have quieted my mind,
Had I not been by sobs and pray'rs arous'd. 25
Ah! must I only 'wake to misery?
Am I no longer to enjoy repose?
Why did Mahala weep?—Why pray? For me!—
For me?—As yet she knows not the Supreme
My sacrifice rejected.—Oh! these tears— 30
These lamentations, but increase my pangs!
I cannot bear them—they have banish'd rest—
They've made me miserable for the night!
Another bitter day I must endure;
And, while by anguish and reproach pursu'd, 35
The smile of approbation will, no doubt,

My brother's ev'ry trifling deed reward.
Oh yes—for him there's solace and delight;
For me there's nought but wretchedness and shame!
I love thee, dear Mahala, as myself! 40
Why then didst thou embitter with thy sobs
Those intervals of rest which grief afforded?

Beneath a bush that overhung the rock
He paus'd awhile—"Oh gentle sleep" he cried,
"Thy balmy blessings let me here partake! 45
Exhausted and fatigued, I sought thy aid,
When on my couch I lay, and scarcely thou
Hadst spread thy downy pinions, when, alas!
The voice of sorrow chas'd thee from my eyes.
Here undisturb'd I may some rest enjoy, 50
If nature, now inanimate and still,
Be not excited by the wrath of Heav'n
To rob me of all quiet.—O thou Earth,
Which ever since the dreadful curse requir'st

l. 50 to 53.—This passage is thus translated by Mrs Collyer—"Here is none to trouble my repose, except *beings inanimate*, influenced by the wrath of Heaven, can drive quiet from me."—Mr. Shoberl's translation is more elegant, "Here I shall not be disturbed, if inanimate nature have not conspired against me." There is an obscurity in our author; by *inanimate beings*, or *inanimate nature*, he may allude to the elements, &c.; but the inanimate state of nature, occasioned at this time by profound sleep, (*l.* 2,) seems to be the meaning more congenial with Cain's situation, and which is therefore adopted.

Incessant toil existence to preserve, 55
Or rather bitter anguish to prolong,
Receive a wretch, and suffer him to have
A few refreshing moments of repose—
No other happiness can I expect,
For I no greater happiness have known." 60

Then on the dewy turf himself he threw;
When Sleep, the pow'r so earnestly invok'd,
Soon in his sable mantle shrouded Cain.

His lonely steps th' impure Anamelech
Had secretly accompanied—and now 65
Beside him stood the fiend—" Deep sleep," said he,
" Hath seal'd his eyes—I by his side will lie,
And to his tortur'd fancy will present
Such dreams as may facilitate his ruin.
Come then Imagination to my aid, 70
With all thy visionary influence,
And such fantastic images collect,
As soonest may contribute to work up
Consuming envy, stormy rage, and all
The hellish passions, which the soul of man 75
Distract, and torture to the highest pitch."
Thus spake the fiend, and by his side reclin'd.

A furious blast arose—the forest shook—
The wind howl'd thro' the thicket—with rude force
It agitated the long-flowing locks, 80
Which shaded late the brow and cheeks of Cain.
In vain the forest shook—with dreadful roar
In vain the tempest howl'd—the locks of Cain
Now play'd in vain about his brow and cheeks,
For heavy sleep still kept his eyelids clos'd. 85

He in a dream beheld a spacious plain,
O'er which were scatter'd sev'ral lonely huts,
Th' abode of poverty and wretchedness!
The field was cultivated, as he thought,
By his own sons and grandsons, now dispers'd. 90
Regardless of the scorching noon-tide rays,
Which their embrowned shoulders play'd upon,
They with laborious industry collected
A scanty produce, or the rugged soil
For the reception of fresh seed prepar'd; 95
Or else pull'd up, with bleeding hands, the thorns
And num'rous thistles, which their fruits o'erran,
Depriving them of their nutritious juice.
Their wives he saw in miserable dwellings,
Full of domestic trouble, now engag'd 100
In actively preparing frugal meals

Their husbands to refresh.—He also saw
His eldest son, Eliel, who, with pain
And tott'ring step a heavy burthen bore—
The sweat descended from his swarthy face, 105
And discontent and sorrow mark'd his brow.
The load with difficulty laying down,
Exhausted and fatigued he lean'd thereon.

"Oh life of misery," he, with a sigh,
Exclaim'd, "Oh life of labor and of pain! 110
Yes—man indeed the bread of sorrow eats—
How heavily on us, the sons of Cain,
The malediction falls!——Oh! did the Lord,
The great Creator of the earth, when he
The dreadful curse pronounc'd—Oh did he then 115
'Gainst all the race of Adam turn his face,
Or are the sons of the first-born alone
To feel its weight? Ah! by Cain's wretched offspring
Severely is the malediction felt;
While there—yes, there, in yonder smiling plains, 120
Inhabited by Abel's progeny,
Who thence have banish'd us, and for our portion
These barren desarts kindly have assign'd—
There—there, in soft and easy indolence,
These favorites luxuriously recline 125

Beneath voluptuous shades; for nature seems
To have exclusively her blessings shower'd
On these more happy sons—the sons of Abel!
For them the earth spontaneously brings forth
Her fruits—they ev'ry joy and comfort taste, 130
While we to indigence and toil are doom'd!"
Eliel having thus pour'd forth his anguish,
Cain thought he saw him lift his burthen up,
And to his hut with fainting steps proceed.

Now, on imagination's sportive wing, 135
The slumberer was carried to a plain
With a variety of flow'rs enamell'd.
In wanton windings limpid streams meander'd
Thro' the dark shades of over-arching bushes.
Now murmur'd they 'fore aromatic bow'rs, 140
And now, between long rows of lofty trees,
Reflecting all the variegated charms
Of fruits and blossoms in their placid currents:
When thro' the flow'ry turf they thus had rov'd,
The streams collected into tranquil lakes. 145
Lo! in a citron grove, which seem'd t' extend
To a great distance, cooling zephyrs play'd,
And wafted all around ambrosial sweets.
A range of lofty fig-trees clos'd the prospect,

And gave the tender flow'rs a grateful shade. 150
Such beauties as were here united, ne'er
Cou'd the delightful Vale of Tempe boast;
No, nor the famous Gnidus, the abode
Of Venus and her love-inspiring train,
Where, on magnificent and stately columns, 155
A temple to the fabled goddess rose.
Now snow-white flocks Cain in his vision saw,
Which in luxuriant pastures stray'd, and cropp'd
The fragrant herbage, while th' enamour'd swain,
Crown'd with a wreath of flow'rs and half reclin'd 160
Under the shady palm, the sweetest strains
To the dear object of his love pour'd forth.
Beneath a high-arch'd bow'r, the boys and girls,
As sweet and blooming as the Loves and Graces,
Together met, and form'd the sportive dance. 165
In ample bowls the grateful bev'rage foam'd;
Among the variegated flow'rs, that deck'd
The loaded tables, shone the golden fruit;
While vocal music and the dulcet notes
Of instruments resounded in the air. 170

l. 151 to 156.—These are the observations of the author, not the thoughts of Cain, for what did he know of Tempe and Gnidus? Indeed, the introduction of those names in a narrative of the primeval age may, with some degree of justice, be condemned: it is an unnecessary deviation from the subject.

Our dreamer thought, that in the midst arose
A youth, who the assembly thus address'd:—

"Friends, I salute you—I, indeed, partake
Of your felicity and jocund mirth—
But listen to my counsel.—True it is, 175
All Nature round us smiles; for, whatsoe'er
Can charm the heart, and fascinate the eye,
Behold, she has unsparingly provided;
But care and cultivation, to preserve
Those bounties, she will constantly require. 180
How is this labor then to be perform'd?
To us, who dedicate our happy lives
To tasks of a more soft and pleasing kind,
'Twould be indeed too toilsome and fatiguing.
How! shall the hand, which is by nature form'd 185
For delicately touching the sweet strings
Of the inspiring harp, be render'd hard
With the laborious culture of the field?
How! shall the head, which formerly reclin'd
Beneath the grateful shade, and which so well 190
Became the roses, that entwin'd its locks,
Be to the fierceness of the sun expos'd?
No, my gay friends, I will impart a thought,
With which, no doubt, an angel has inspir'd me.—

We still on beds of violet shall lie, 195
While the strong brawny tenants of yon plain
Shall all the drudgery for us endure.
What, friends, of my proposal do you think?
'Tis well—your smiles declare your approbation.
Assist me then; and, ere tomorrow's dawn, 200
Our hope shall a reality become.
Amid the darkness of th' approaching night
Let us, my brethren, silently repair
To yonder field, where dwell the sons of toil;
Exhausted with the labor of the day, 205
They'll sure be buried in the arms of sleep;
We'll then surprise them, bind them in their huts,
And lead them in captivity away.
The men our ground shall till—their wives and daughters
Shall, my fair countrywomen, be your slaves. 210
But mark—the silent night must be the time
To execute our plan; for, tho' in number
We far exceed our hardy neighbours, toil
Has brac'd their nerves, and made them desperate.
We must avoid an open contest, which 215
With danger and some loss would be attended."
Thus spake the youth—with shouts of approbation
The joyful crowd acceded to the scheme.

Another scene now struck the dreamer's eyes—
Night's sable mantle o'er the earth was spread, 220
When cries of terror, mingled with the shouts
Of triumph, issued from his children's huts;
Amid the gloominess of night, the flames,
Which from those cottages ascended, ting'd
The waves that broke around the redden'd shore; 225
And, by their light, the dreamer saw his sons,
With all their wives and children, bound and driv'n
'Fore Abel's offspring like a flock of sheep.

Such was Cain's dream; he trembled in his sleep;
While Abel, who discover'd him beneath 230
The bush that overhung the rock, approach'd,
And, with a look of fond affection gazing,
Thus tenderly in gentle whispers said—

"Ah, my dear brother, mayst thou soon awake,
That all the sweet sensations of my heart 235
I may pour forth, and press thee to my bosom!
I love thee, brother; I with grief behold
Thy present pain, and gladly wou'd remove
That jealousy, which so disturbs thy soul.
Oh! mayst thou soon awake, and may again 240
Returning love our mutual bliss insure.

Hush! ye impatient wishes—Oh be still,
Ye zephyrs that among the bushes sport—
Cease, ye melodious warblers, cease to sing,
Lest you may interrupt that balmy sleep, 245
His weary limbs, perhaps, require.—Alas!
How pale—how agitated he appears—
In his distorted features fury reigns!
Why, dreams of horror, do you thus distress him?
Begone, and leave his soul t' enjoy repose— 250
Come, all ye pleasing images of love—
Domestic transports—conjugal delights—
Come all that in creation is most lovely—
Oh come, and tranquillize his ruffled mind—
That gay and smiling as the vernal morn 255
He may awake—that joy may cheer his heart,
And, full of gratitude and fervent zeal,
His lips may with thanksgivings overflow!"

No more he said—but on his brother gaz'd
With eyes of tenderness and deep concern. 260

As a fierce lion, couch'd beneath a rock—
(Whom to avoid, the traveller alarm'd,
With trembling paces, a wide circuit takes)
If the fell arrow, in its rapid flight,

Suddenly pierce his shaggy side—springs up 265
With dreadful roar his enemy to seek,
Foams, rages, and destroys the first he meets—
Perhaps a little innocent—a child
That's playing with the flowers on the grass.
So started from his sleep the furious Cain: 270
He foam'd—while stormy rage, like a thick cloud,
Was gath'ring on his knitted brow.—It burst!
He stamp'd upon the ground, and loud exclaim'd—

" Gape, Earth, and hide me—hide me from myself!
Oh bury me, a wretch, in thy abyss— 275
A wretch indeed—and—miserable prospect!
My sons are doom'd to equal wretchedness!
Gape, O thou earth—but no—thou wilt not open!
In vain I call—in vain I seek thy shelter—
The great Avenger will not let thee open! 280
He has decreed, that woe shall be my lot—
He has denied me ev'n the joys of hope;
For he withdraws the veil, and represents
The dreadful horrors of futurity!
Curs'd be the birth-hour, when my mother first 285
Brought forth a son—and doubly curs'd the place,
Where first the pains of travail overtook her!
May ev'ry thing that grows thereon decay!

May he, who strives to cultivate it, lose
His toil and seed!—May sudden horrors seize 290
All those, who pass over the hateful spot!"

Thus rav'd the miserable Cain—when Abel,
Pale as the sculptur'd stone, with timid step
Approach'd, and now in falt'ring accents said—

"My brother!—Cain!—but no—it cannot be! 295
Sure some rebellious spirit, hurl'd from Heav'n
By the Almighty's thunder, has assum'd
His form, and utters these vile blasphemies!
Where is my brother?—Him I only seek.
Where art thou, Cain?—Where art thou, my dear
brother?" 300

"Here! here I am!" vociferated Cain.
"Here! here! thou smiling favorite of Heav'n—
Aye, and of Nature too, whose vip'rous offspring
Will in due time exclusively possess
All, all the blessings which this world affords! 305
Oh, yes—it is decreed, and there must be
A tribe of slaves t' attend the darling race—
To be their beasts of burthen—to endure
For them the labors of the scorching day!

Their tender hands must not be render'd hard 310
With toil—their pleasures must not be disturb'd!
No—they must live at ease—they must recline
In shady bow'rs—they must——O misery!—
Hell and damnation in my bosom rage!"

"Ah Cain, my brother," Abel trembling said, 315
While tenderness, anxiety, and fear,
Were on his countenance imprinted, "Say
What hateful vision has thy soul disturb'd?
I came here with the early dawn to seek thee,
T' embrace and bless thee with th' approaching day;
But with what hellish passions thou'rt inflam'd— 321
With what unkindness thou receiv'st my love!
Oh! when shall peace our habitations bless—
When shall sweet amity our bosoms fill
With social bliss and heart-elating pleasure? 325
Ah! when shall we those happy days enjoy—
Those days, for which with fond solicitude
Our tender—our indulgent parents hope?
O Cain, dear Cain, how sudden is this change!
Canst thou forget the tears of joy I shed, 330
When we affectionately clasp'd each other?
Alas! if I've offended thee, my brother,
Unconsciously offended——O good Heav'n!

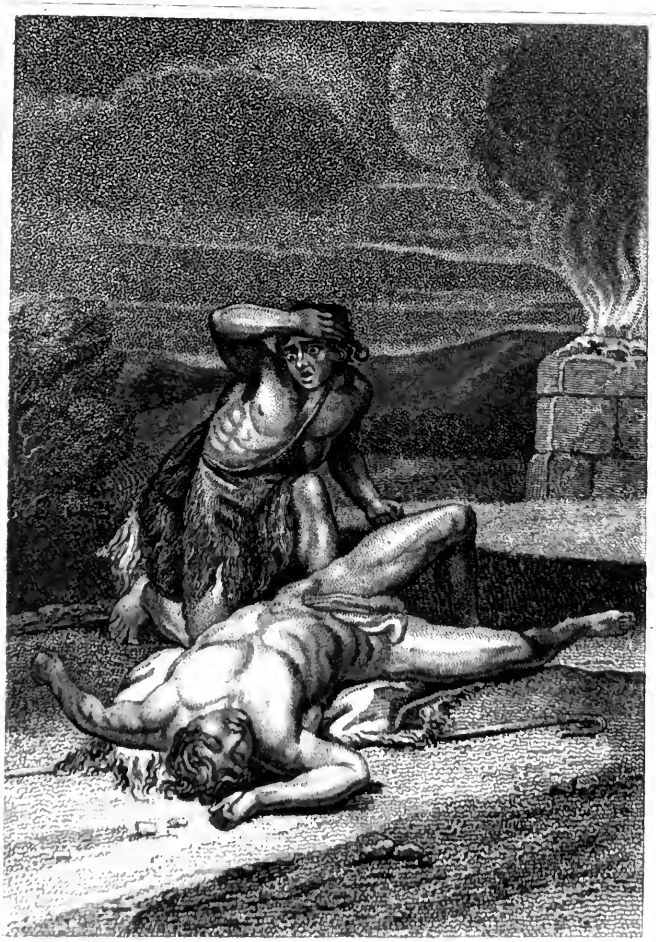
Why dost thou cast on me that furious look?
By all that's sacred I entreat thee, Cain, 335
Dispel the tempest that disturbs thy soul—
Forgive my unintentional offence,
And suffer me to press thee to my heart."

He said, and stoop'd to clasp his brother's knees;
When, starting back, Cain furiously exclaim'd— 340

"Ha! serpent, wou'dst thou twine thyself about me?"
Rage nerv'd his arm—a massy club he swung,
Which, sweeping thro' the air with desp'rate force,
On Abel's head descended—to the earth
The hapless victim fell, who, with a look 345
Of pity and forgiveness, fix'd on Cain
His dying eyes, and suddenly expir'd.
The blood, which now his golden locks distain'd,
In crimson streams flow'd at the murd'rer's feet!

Aghast and motionless with horror, stood 350
The guilty Cain—cold damps bedew'd his limbs,

l. 339.—In Shoberl's translation, Abel here offers to embrace his brother; but certainly his stooping down to clasp the knees of Cain not only displays the submissive disposition of Abel, but renders his murder more natural; for, being in this humble position, he had no means of retreating or defending himself.



R. W. Satchwell del. — T. Kennedy sculp.

"then with clench'd fist
Her forehead violently struck."

CANTO IV line 305

While with a palpitating heart he saw
The last convulsive motion of his brother—
Yes, saw the reeking blood, which from the wound
In torrents gush'd—"Oh fatal blow," he cried, 355
"Awake, dear Abel—brother——Oh awake!
Alas! how pale his face—his eyes are fix'd!
The blood streams from his head—wretch that I was!
What am I now?—Superlatively wretched—
For horrors—oh—infernal horrors seize me!" 360

Thus raving, furiously the blood-stain'd club
He dash'd against the ground, then with clench'd fist
His forehead violently struck.—The corse,
With tardy step, he ventur'd to approach;
Then rais'd it from the earth—"Awake, my brother,
My brother—Oh awake!—How his head bleeds! 366
Ah me! and see it droops! how helpless!—Dead!
Oh horror!—misery!—yes, he is dead!
How great my crime—I instantly will flee—
But where—where hide? Support me, trembling
limbs!" 370
He said—and in the thicket hid himself.

Elate with triumph, stood th' insidious fiend
Near the deceas'd.—His bosom swell'd with pride—

His form dilated with excessive joy,
And high and dreadful tow'r'd he in the air, 375
Like a black column of thick-gath'ring smoke
Ascending from the blazing scatter'd ruins
Of a lone cottage, whose inhabitants
Were in the rustic labors of the day
Engag'd, while the devouring flames consum'd 380
Their scanty property—their little all!
Thus the seducer. First, with hellish smile,
He on the murd'rer gaz'd—then on the corse.

"Oh welcome—welcome charming sight!" he cried,
"Delightful spectacle!—for the first time 385
This earth I see with human blood made moist.
The murm'ring current of Heav'n's sacred springs,
Before the Thund'rer from those seats of bliss
Had banish'd us, ne'er gave me half this pleasure!
Oh! ne'er did the archangels' dulcet harps 390
Sound in my ears so soothing and so sweet
As the last sighs of this expiring youth—
This brother—by a brother's hand destroy'd!
Thou brave inhabitant of the new world—
Thou noblest effort of thy Maker's hand— 395

l. 376—7.—This simile is prematurely introduced. There were no conflagrations, according to scriptural history, till the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah. Gen. xix. 24—8.

Thou last too of his glorious works—oh what
A despicable figure art thou now!
Rise, lovely youth—thou friend of angels, rise!
Be not so tardy in thy pray'rs and praises—
It ill becomes the worship of thy God! 400
He moves not!—Thanks to wickedness for that;
But mine the honor!—I provok'd the wretch—
His arm I guided, when he gave the blow.
By deeds like these, which Satan's self shall envy,
I from obscurity will raise myself, 405
And soar above the sycophantic spirits!
Now to the throne of Hell I will repair,
And great—oh great my raptures, when I hear
Its vast concave re-echo with my praise!
Then shall I move triumphantly among 410
Those crowds of vulgar fiends, whom never yet
Such daring enterprise hath render'd noble!
Then, with contempt, shall I look down on those,
Who, hitherto, have been my equals deem'd."

Once more he arrogantly turn'd his eyes 415
To take another look of the deceas'd;
But soon the hateful features of despair
Restrain'd the contumelious smile, and check'd
That pride, which sat on his expanded brow.

The Lord commanded all the pangs of hell 420
To seize him instantly—and so it was.
He with a sea of torture was o'erwhelm'd!
He curs'd the hour in which he was created—
He curs'd Eternity, replete with torments,
And, sending forth a yell of horror, fled! 425

Soon the last sighs of the expiring Abel
Ascended to th' Almighty's throne, and there
Demanded vengeance of Eternal Justice!
A peal of thunder issu'd from the Heavens;
The golden harps forthwith were silent—all 430
The glorious hallelujahs were suspended!
Thrice thro' the sanctuary's lofty arch
The thunder echo'd with an awful roar!
It ceas'd—and now the voice of the Most High,
Proceeding from the silv'ry cloud which wrapt 435
The sacred throne, to an archangel call'd.
The blessed spirit instantly advanc'd,
And veil'd with his transplendent wings his face.

"Death," said the Lord, "hath his first victim seiz'd
Among mankind.—Thee, with the sacred charge 440
Of summoning together all the souls
Of righteous men, henceforward I entrust.

I cheer'd myself the soul of dying Abel—
Attend thou the last moments of the just.
When his voice falters—when the damps of death 445
His brow bedew, and pangs his frame torment,
Then calm his fears, and to his soul convey
Th' assurance of eternal joy and peace,
That thus, with confidence inspir'd, he may
Look round with transport, and contented die! 450
Now to the earth descend, and greet the soul
Of him, who by his brother has been slain;
Attend him, Michael, and against the murd'rer
Pronounce the sentence due to his offence."

Thus spoke th' Omnipotent; and thrice again 455
The thunder echo'd thro' the lofty arch.
The lucid messengers, with rapid wing,
Thro' the celestial ranks their course pursued;
And, having pass'd Heav'n's portals, (for to them
The Everlasting Gates lift up their heads,) 460
The boundless space they travers'd, and at length
Among innumerable suns and orbs—
Resplendent sight!—alighted on the earth.

l. 460.—Ps. xxiv. *v.* 7. It is in the original, "The gates spontaneously opened."

The angel, now appointed to attend
The righteous dead, from her ensanguin'd dust 465
The soul of Abel call'd—the blessed spirit,
With a celestial smile, obey'd; and soon
The purest and the most essential parts
Of the slain body instantly flew off,
And intermingling with the balmy odours 470
Wafted by gentle zephyrs from the flow'rs,
Which sprang up in th' irradiated circle
Encompassing the angel, they the soul
Envelop'd, forming an ethereal body.
With transport, hitherto unknown, the spirit 475
On the celestial messenger now gaz'd.

With sweet benignity and heav'nly joy
The angel cordially approach'd, and said—

"Thou righteous soul—beloved, happy spirit,
Oh welcome from thy covering of dust! 480
Receive my warm embraces.—I rejoice
The Lord ordain'd, that I should be the first
To introduce thee to the realms of bliss,
Where angels, without number, wait thy coming.
Eternal happiness—eternal joy 485

Shall be the compensation of thy virtue!
Thou, blessed spirit, face to face shalt see,
And ever have communion with, thy God.
Thou shalt experience all his wondrous love,
And of the riches of his grace partake! 490
Again let us embrace, thou righteous soul!
The first, who this frail covering of dust
For glory everlasting hast exchang'd!"

"Oh yes, celestial friend! let us embrace,"
The soul of Abel said; and, with the sense 495
Of exquisite beatitude o'ercome,
Reclining on the angel, paus'd awhile.—

"Consummate joy!—unutterable bliss!
When in my perishable clay, from which
My soul is now so happily releas'd— 500
During the solitude and solemn calm
Of midnight, to contemplate I was wont
The charms of virtue; and such thoughts sublime
Then elevated me above myself,
Methought I felt the presence of my God, 505
And wept with holy transport! What was this
But a faint dawn of the ecstatic joy,

Which I at present taste? Oh! now am I
More deeply sensible of virtue's charms!
Now—now more efficaciously I feel 510
The attributes of majesty divine!
New thoughts arise within me—heav'nly thoughts!
Where are the fragrant beauties of the spring?
Where the all-dazzling lustre of the sun?
My thoughts are far more lovely—far more bright.
Again let us embrace, celestial friend! 516
Eternal happiness is mine—for, oh!
I now shall be incessantly employ'd
In praising Him, who with unbounded goodness
Bestows on those, who humbly have essay'd 520
To lead a life of purity and virtue,
Ineffable delight and endless bliss!
To praise his holy name I now shall join,
And, in his presence, be for ever blest!"

l 512—15.—Mr. Shoberl's translation of this passage is by no means so poetical and energetic as that of Mrs. Collyer: the former renders it—"What thoughts arise within me! lovely as spring—bright and resplendent as the sun!" The latter translates it thus—"What new thoughts—what are now the beauties of spring? O sun, where is now thy dazzling lustre?" Abel's present happiness, we are to suppose, far exceeded in beauty and splendor every thing experienced or known in mortal life.

l. 516.—This line is given as narrative in Mrs. Collyer's translation—"The enraptured soul again embraced the angel," &c. but, according to Shoberl's copy, such unnecessary interruption is here avoided.

The happy spirits thus convers'd, and long 525
In the reciprocal embrace rejoic'd.

"Now follow me, my friend," the angel said,
"My flight accompany, and quit this earth.
Regret not those, whom thou hast left behind;
For all beloved objects—and to thee 530
None but the virtuous can now be dear—
Will follow thee, ere many years elapse,
And join thee in the regions of delight!
Now blessed spirits eagerly await
Thy coming.—Haste, their welcome to receive! 535
Oh haste to join in their incessant songs
Of praises, and thanksgivings to the Lord!"

"I follow thee," the happy soul replied—
"With rapture follow thee, thou best of friends,
(Whose heav'nly nature far surpasses mine,) 540
To regions of ineffable delight!
Oh! my beloved kindred, whom awhile
I in this vale of sorrow leave behind,
Farewell! The term allotted to your lives,
When finish'd—when the hour of death arrives, 545
And thou, celestial guardian of their souls,
Descend'st to meet them—then, th' Almighty's throne

Devoutly I'll approach, and humbly beg
Permission to accompany thy flight,
That I, with rapturous emotion, may 550
Behold their souls ascending from a state
Of vile corruption to eternal bliss!
Thee, dearest Thirza, shall I also see;
When o'er my mould'ring dust thou long hast mourn'd,
And when thy lisping infant thou hast taught 555
To be as pure and virtuous as thyself;
On quitting then this covering of clay,
Oh! with what transport in my fond embrace
Shall I receive thee—ne'er again to part!"

Thus Abel spake, as he began t' ascend, 560
Attended by the angel, from the earth;
When turning to behold, for the last time,
And breathe a parting blessing on, the spot,
Which the dear objects of his love contain'd,
He saw his brother, on whose countenance 565
Guilt and remorse indelibly were stamp'd.
Now o'er his head he rais'd his clenched hands,
While wildly roll'd around his haggard eyes;
Then with his fist repeatedly he struck
His throbbing breast, and, frantic with despair, 570
Fell on the earth and trembled in the dust.

Tears of compassion flow'd from Abel's eyes;
He from the dreadful object turn'd aside,
And found himself and his celestial friend
Surrounded by a num'rous host of angels. 575
The tutelary spirits of the earth
Attended, and their holy joy express'd
On his deliverance from sin and death.
With rapture they embrac'd, when they'd convey'd
The heav'n-bound traveller to the confines 580
Of the terrestrial atmosphere: and now,
Reclining on a crimson cloud, their flight
Thro' realms of æther they accompanied
With a triumphant hymn—the dulcet notes
Of lutes and of the silver strings of harps 585
Were mingled with the charming melody
Of their celestial voices, while, in strains,
Responsive, thus the blessed spirits sang—

"The new inhabitant of Heav'n ascends!
Oh lovely—lovely as returning spring 590
He now ascends, attended with delight—
With ev'ry smiling joy.—Hail him, ye stars,
Thro' th' illimitable expanse dispers'd!
Oh! hail your sister planet, too, the Earth!
Glows she not now with more than wonted beauty? 595

Tho' lab'ring under the Almighty's curse,
Behold! the Earth has nourish'd in her dust
A being worthy immortality!
Oh! with what splendor is she now surrounded!
A fresher verdure on her meadows smiles; 600
A brighter radiance glows too on her hills!

"The new inhabitant of Heav'n ascends—
He rises! while, at the celestial portals,
Myriads of angels his arrival wait—
Impatiently they wait, to introduce 605
The first who has ascended from the Earth
To realms of joy—impatiently they wait
T' embrace, and with ne'er-fading roses crown
Their new companion.—Oh! with what delight
The regions of eternity he'll enter, 610
To join, beneath the aromatic shades
Of ever-verdant bow'rs, th' angelic host
In praising and in glorifying Him
From whom his very happiness proceeds—
The source of bliss—the author of all good! 615

"With songs of praise the ever-blessed day
We celebrated, when thy youthful soul
Descended from thy great Creator's hands

To animate thy mortal frame.—Oh! yes,
We solemniz'd it, and we shall again! 620
We saw the virtues in thy op'ning mind
Grow up, and bloom like lilies in the field—
We saw thy longings after holiness!
Invisible, we all thy steps attended,
And mark'd with pleasure thy integrity. 625
Yes, ev'ry action, ev'ry wish—the tears,
Which from th' unsullied source of virtue flow'd,
We witness'd with ineffable delight!
In his devout thanksgivings we have join'd—
With all his tender feelings sympathiz'd— 630
Virtue he lov'd; and virtue was his guide;
Then shall his virtue meet a due reward.

"The new inhabitant of Heav'n ascends—
He now ascends.——Salute him, sons of light,
And crown him with celestial roses!—him, 635
Whom God delights to honor, honor ye!
Welcome his spirit, that is now releas'd
From the vile bondage of mortality!
Lo! like a wither'd flow'r his body lies—
Yonder it lies.—Receive his precious dust, 640
O parent Earth—receive his dust again!

With fragrant flow'rs let each returning Spring
Adorn the turf that covers his remains!
We each revolving year will celebrate—
With songs of praise will celebrate the day, 645
On which the first emancipated soul
From earth ascended to the seat of bliss."

Thus sang the guardian angels, and again
To earth descended on their radiant cloud.

Now, madden'd by despair, the guilty Cain 650
In the recesses of the thicket stood;
No change of place could consolation yield.
To flee he oft attempted; but in vain
The horrors that o'ertook him sought t' escape.
Ev'n so the traveller wou'd fain avoid 655
By flight the dang'rous serpent that he meets—
The venomous assailant him pursues,
And 'round his body firmly winds himself;
In vain he flees—in vain th' ill-fated wretch
To disengage himself from torture strives: 660
His pois'nous fangs already tear his bosom,
And to his heart convey the fatal sting.
So vainly Cain from torture strove to flee.

"Oh!" he exclaim'd—"Oh! that I could escape
The sight of that ensanguin'd corse—but, ah! 665
Whithersoe'er I go, his blood pursues,
And bathes my very footsteps!——Where—oh where,
Wretch that I am!—shall I a refuge find?
Oh horror!—his last look—what have I done?
Infernal deed! It is the work of hell, 670
And all hell's torments I already feel!
I have destroy'd my brother, and with him
Destroy'd his unborn children.—Ha! what then?—
They were the destin'd murd'rers of mine!
What sounds from yonder bushes strike my ear? 675
They're like the groans of the expiring race!
Hence, trembling feet, bear me in haste away
From the pursuing blood—far—far away
From this tremendous theatre of death!
Hence, trembling knees, stain'd with a brother's blood,
Bear me in haste away—away to hell!" 681
This said, he was about to flee again.

l. 672—4.—This allusion to his dream is omitted by Mrs. Collier, probably from a notion that it was abruptly introduced.—It is thus given by Mr. Shoberl: "I have destroyed the unborn murderers of my children." The death of Abel certainly showed the fallacy of his dream. How could the *unborn* be deemed murderers? The liberty which has here been taken in rendering the introduction of this idea more natural, will, it is presumed, meet with the critic's approbation.

A gloomy cloud descended at his feet,
And from the darkness came an awful voice,
Which loudly said—"Where is thy brother Abel?" 685

Cain starting back, pale as his brother's corse,
In falt'ring accents said—"Wretch that I am!
I cannot tell—am I my brother's keeper?"

Then from the cloud loud thunder quickly burst;
The grass and the surrounding bushes were 690
Wrapt in a blaze, while 'fore th' affrighted Cain
Th' archangel stood in terrible array!
On his majestic brow were strongly stamp'd
The awful judgments of the Ever Great!
A flaming thunderbolt his right hand wielded, 695
And o'er the trembling Cain his left was stretch'd—
He spake.—The dreadful thunder roll'd again.

"Stop, O thou trembler, and thy sentence hear.
Thus saith the Lord of Hosts—What hast thou done?
The blood of Abel crieth from the earth 700

l. 685—688.—See Gen. ch. iv. *v.* 9.

l. 699 to 706.—*v.* 10, 11, 12.—According to Gessner, it is, "Thou art cursed on the earth which hath drunk the blood of thy brother, shed by thy hand:" but the language of Scripture is here preferred, being more poetical, as it is less encumbered with monosyllables.

To me; and on that earth, which to receive
A brother's blood, shed by a brother's hand,
Her mouth hath open'd, cursed now art thou!
To thee for ever barren shall it be!
And thou, on her wide surface, all thy days 705
A fugitive—a vagabond shall rove!"

Now all the torments of the damn'd—remorse,
Deep anguish, and convulsive agony—
Th' affrighted sinner seiz'd—his head was bow'd,
And on the ground his eyes were firmly fix'd. 710
As looks the impious atheist, when God
In judgment terrible commands the earth
To shake—when the polluted temples' domes
Are levelled—when the sinners' gay abodes
Are swallow'd by the open-mouth'd abyss— 715
And when his ears, 'midst Nature's sad convulsion,
Are with the groans of dying men assail'd,
And he's surrounded with the flames and smoke,
Which thickly burst from the divided earth;
Thus look'd—thus shook with fear the fratricide! 720
He wou'd have spoken; but his trembling lips
In vain attempted utterance.—At length,
In falt'ring accents, not presuming once
To raise his downcast eyes, he faintly said—

"Great is my crime—ah! much too great indeed
To be forgiven—but, tremendous Judge, 725
Thou on this earth hast cursed me—oh! then,
My punishment is more than I can bear!
An outcast now, where can I hide myself—
Where from thy omnipresence can I flee! 730
Thus banish'd from society—a wretch—
A vagabond—the first I chance to meet
Will raise his hand a murderer to slay!"

"Then vengeance sevenfold on him shall fall,
Who sheds thy blood!" the thunderer exclaim'd; 735

l. 728.—Throughout this speech our poet has entirely deviated from scripture. He has made Cain acknowledge the greatness of his crime, (*l.* 725); but we find in Genesis iv. 13, that he only complains of the greatness of his *punishment*—"And Cain said unto the Lord, my punishment is greater than I can bear." These words are, therefore, introduced here, though omitted by Gessner.

l. 730—1.—"And from thy face shall I be hid," Gen. iv. 14. Cain, in scripture, complains that he shall never hereafter meet with God's countenance or favor. Our poet has given another meaning to this text, (probably on account of Michael's representing God,) which by some, perhaps, may be deemed more poetical; but the lines would certainly be more congenial with the spirit of scripture, if rendered thus—

Lo! thou hast render'd me an outcast now,
And from thy countenance shall I be hid!

l. 732—3.—In Shoberl's translation, Cain prays to be murdered—"O that the first who meets me may slay me!"—In Mrs. Collyer's translation, the sense of the scripture is properly preserved, as in Gen. iv. 14.—"And it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me."—i. e. I shall be in danger of being slain by every one I meet.

l. 734—735.—Gen. iv. 15.

"Gnawing remorse and gloomy discontent
Shall strongly be imprinted on thy brow,
That every one who meets thee shall be struck
With horror, and, on seeing thee, shall quit
Whatever path thy wand'ring feet pursue, 740
Exclaiming—There goes Cain the murderer!"

The curse announc'd, th' archangel disappear'd—
Loud thunder issued from the rising cloud,
And lo! a dreadful whirlwind by the roots
Tore up the trees, and in the thicket howl'd, 745
As roars a criminal, who undergoes
Th' excruciating torture of the law!

Awhile stood motionless the guilty Cain—
Despair glar'd in his eyes—ferocity
Still sat upon his brow. The furious winds 750
Made every erected hair to shake!
At length, from his contracted eyebrows casting
A fearful glance, with quiv'ring lips he cried—

l. 736—741.—Our author has given a very ingenious turn to the *mark*, which "the Lord set upon Cain," and which has occasioned a variety of opinions, though, in all probability, a figurative expression, like many others in scripture.

l. 747—8.—This simile could be well dispensed with. Cain was a criminal, who certainly would have been doomed to suffer, had there been penal laws at that time.

"Oh! why did he not utterly destroy me—
Why not annihilate me on the spot, 755
That no vile traces of this wretched self
In the creation might be visible?
Why—why did he not blast me with his lightnings—
Why with his thunderbolts not strike me down,
And bury me in earth's remotest parts? 760
But no—oh! no—for never-ceasing pangs—
For torments without end, I am preserv'd!
The outcast of the world—by God forsaken—
Loath'd by all Nature—by myself abhorr'd—
Already am I haunted by those fiends, 765
Deep anguish, keen remorse, and wild despair,
Which guilt like mine incessantly pursue!
Excluded from society—from God—
A wand'rer on the earth—I shall endure
The tortures of the damn'd—I feel them now! 770
Thou arm, which didst with such celerity
The fatal implement of murder wield,
Th' impulse of vile passion to obey,
Accursed may'st thou be, and on my body
Oh mayst thou wither, like a blighted branch 775

l. 775—6.—In rendering this poem English blank verse, some epithets are unavoidably introduced—"Like the blighted branch of a tree," could never answer to our metre.

Of an unfruitful tree!—Accurs'd the hour,
When by a dream from hell I was deceiv'd!
Why silent, Nature?—Wherefore dost thou not
Signs of abhorrence manifest?—O Earth,
Wherever my foot wanders, thou art cursed! 780
Where art thou, damning fiend, that didst suggest
The madd'ning dream?—Oh! where, that I may curse thee—
Hast thou to Hell return'd?—Well! may'st thou there
Endure for ever the soul-rending pangs
Which here I feel—I cannot curse thee more! 785
Ha! there I see him—there too I perceive
The flames of Hell!—Now—now the sons of darkness
With triumph gaze—behold! with joy they smile—
Gaze on, ye fiends—smile at my misery!
Or, if you know what 'tis to feel compassion, 790
Then pity me—for oh! not Satan's self
Has ever felt the pangs which I endure."

Thus rav'd the troubled Cain; then speechless sank,
Exhausted, on the body of a tree
Uprooted by the storm. Here he remain'd 795
In pensive agony a tedious while:
At length he started, shudder'd, and exclaim'd—

"What noise is that? Who's there? My murder'd
brother!
I hear his groans!—I see his streaming blood!
Have pity, brother; oh! have pity pray 800
On these my suff'rings, and pursue me not!"
Silent and motionless again he sat,
Sighs only bursting from his tortur'd heart.

In the mean time, the father of mankind,
Accompanied by Eve, his cottage left, 805
T' enjoy the beauties of the new-born day.

"How charming—how majestic the sun's beams,"
Eve now exclaim'd, "gilding with mildest ray
The mist that over yon horizon hovers!
How charming the appearance of the country! 810
Come, let us wander thro' the glist'ning dew
Amid the lovely scene, till labor calls
Thee to the meadows, and domestic cares
My presence need at home. O my beloved!
How beauteous still the Earth, altho' accurs'd! 815
Methinks, the same proportion now it bears
To Paradise, (by my transgression lost!)
As thou, in the first days of innocence,

Didst to the angels, whom we then beheld.
See, my beloved, how all Nature smiles! 820
Each bush—each tree reverberates with songs
Of praises—the domestic animals
Sport round the huts, and, with unbounded glee
And cheerful voice, hail the first beams of morn!"

"True, my dear Eve," said Adam, "still the Earth
Is beautiful, tho' subject to the curse— 825
Traces indelible it still displays
Of the transcendent goodness and compassion
Of God to us, who, by our shameful fall
And base ingratitude, can boast no claim 830
To mercy; but, unworthy as we are,
His loving kindness we experience still.
Yes, God is far more merciful—more kind
Than tongue can speak, or fancy can conceive.
My love, let's hasten to the flow'ry mead, 835
Where wander Abel's flock amid the dew—
There we, perhaps, may find our pious son
Chanting to God his morning hymn of praise!"

Eve then replied—"Permit me, my beloved,
Now to communicate the fond design, 840
Which, ere I left my cottage, I had form'd—

The finest figs I in my store could find,
With some dried leaves, I've in this basket plac'd—
I'll hasten to the field, thought I, to Cain
And to my first-born will present these fruits! 845
They'll be to him a grateful beverage,
While resting in the shade, with toil o'ercome.
To him, then Adam, let us hasten first;
For oh! I no attention wou'd omit,
That can contribute from his mind t' erase 850
The gloomy notion, which he entertains,
That our regard for him less tender is
Than the affection we for Abel feel!"

"Ah! how praise-worthy, my beloved Eve,
Is thy fond care," with rapture Adam cried, 855
"I thank thee, wife, for thy more prudent counsel.
Yes, let us go to Cain—thy present give,
That he no longer may or think or say,
That all our love for Abel is reserv'd.
Amid the beauties of this morn serene, 860
Perhaps, his heart more open we shall find
To all th' impressions of sweet tenderness!"

This said, in haste they sought the field of Cain,
Eve carrying the basket on her arm.

"What happiness!" they to each other cried, 865
As they their pace redoubled—"What delight!
If our first-born receive us with affection—
If Nature's charms, which evermore inspire
The pious breast with sentiments of virtue,
Shou'd have awaken'd filial love, and made 870
His heart susceptible of soft sensations."

Just from behind a thicket they had come,
When Eve, who a few paces had advanc'd,
Now suddenly with terror starting back,
In quiv'ring tone exclaim'd—"Ha! who lies there? 875
O Adam, say—Who is it yonder lies?
He lies not like a man asleep; but ah! like one,
Who's been precipitated to the earth.
His face, behold, is towards the ground—ah me!
These golden locks are Abel's—Adam see! 880
Why do I tremble? Oh! awake my son!
Oh! Abel, my beloved, pray awake—
Ah! turn to me, dear Abel, that fair face,
Expressive of the tenderest regard—
Awake! awake from this unnatural sleep!" 885

Now, with anxiety, approach'd they nearer,
When Adam, trembling and retiring back,

Exclaim'd—" Oh horror! horror! from his brow
Blood trickles, and his head is bath'd in blood!"
Eve, raising then his stiffen'd arm, rejoin'd— 890
" My son! dear Abel—oh! my son, my son!"
And sank, pale as the corse she now lamented,
On Adam's throbbing breast. Both silent stood,
For grief and horror utterance denied.

The wretched Cain, still frantic with despair, 895
While thro' the dreary thicket he was wand'ring,
Unconsciously approach'd th' ensanguin'd spot,
Where the dead body of his brother lay.
He stopp'd—gaz'd on the corse, and then beheld
His father motionless—his mother pale, 900
Supported by her husband's trembling arms.
" Oh! he is dead!—I kill'd him!" he cried out,
" Aye! tremble at the horrible confession—
I murder'd him!—And cursed be the hour,
When thou, my father, thy first-born begatt'st— 905
When thou, O wretched mother, brought'st me forth—
I murder'd him!" repeated Cain, and fled.

l. 905.—Cain's cursing his father is omitted in Shoberl's translation, though alluded to in Adam's following speech, *l.* 925—929, and also in Eve's, who laments that he did not curse her alone—*l.* 956, 7, 8, and 975, 6.

As when two lovers (to each other dear,
Their mutual virtues mutual love inspiring)
Together sit, enjoying social bliss— 910
A sudden tempest damps their joy; and oh!
So dreadfully the vivid lightnings flash,
That the blue flame now quivers o'er their heads!
Each strives to succour each—but ah! in vain;
Lock'd in each other's arms, they lifeless seem, 915
Tho' living still: So Adam and his wife,
In silent anguish, motionless and pale,
For a long time insensible remain'd.
First from the lethargy of grief awoke
The father of mankind; and, looking round, 920
"Where am I?" he in broken accents cried;
"Why tremble thus my limbs?—My God! my God!
Ah! there he lies! O wretched—wretched father!
Accumulated horrors seize my soul!
His brother murder'd him—he own'd his guilt; 925
And, dreadful thought! he curs'd us both and fled.
My blood runs cold—my veins already freeze!
Wretch that I am!—Oh! miserable parent!
One son has curs'd thee, and another lies—
Before thee lies imbru'd in his own blood! 930
What anguish—Oh! what torments on myself

l. 908 to 915.—This simile is not in Shobert's copy.

And my unhappy offspring I have brought!
Ah fatal sin! Oh Abel!—oh my son!
And thou, my wife, awak'st thou not again
To wretchedness?—ah! how my fears increase! 935
Alas! hast thou expir'd too in my arms?
Am I in hopeless sorrow left alone?
But, praised be the Lord, for he is just,
And I a miserable sinner am!
An icy chillness steals through all my veins, 940
Ev'n to my throbbing heart; the shades of darkness
Close round my languid eyes: be speedy, death;
With all thy terrors thou art welcome now:
Ah! why delay'st? Oh Abel, my dear son!"

This said, again he on the body gaz'd, 945
While tears flow'd down his venerable face,
And with them mingled the cold dews of death.

"Ah! my beloved Eve," continued he,
"Once more thou openest thine eyes to weep;
Once more awak'st t' unutterable grief: 950
Dear partner of my sorrows, what distress—
What poignant anguish now before thee lies!"

"Oh Adam!" Eve in dying accents said,
"He's gone! The murderer's terrific voice

No longer thunders in my ears! Ah me! 955
He curs'd us both—I heard his malediction.
Inhuman fratricide, on me alone
Let all thy dreadful imprecations fall!
'Twas I, wretch that I am, who first transgress'd!
Oh Abel—Abel, my dear son—my son!" 960

From Adam's arms now on the corse she sank;
And, bathing with her tears the clay-cold body,
Again began—" Oh God! his fixed eyes
To me no longer turn! Awake—awake,
My son, awake! Alas! in vain I call— 965
He's dead! Ah me! this—this is dreadful death—
This is the punishment on sin pronounc'd—
And I——O torture inexpressible!
I the first sinner was—Tormenting thought!
O Adam, my belov'd, each tear thou shedd'st 970
To me's a keen reproof—I am the cause.
Thee, my dear husband, I seduc'd. From me,
Afflicted parent, thy son's blood demand.
From me demand your brother, wretched children.
Curse me, thou fratricide, curse me alone; 975
And spare thy father—I transgress'd the first.
Oh Abel—oh my son, thy streaming blood

Accuseth me, unhappiest of mothers!"
She said, and with her tears the corse bedew'd.

Then Adam, with a look of fond concern, 980
Gaz'd on his wife, and tenderly exclaim'd—

"Cease, my beloved, to torment me thus;
Oh! I intreat thee, by our misery—
Our mutual affection—I intreat thee,
These bitter self-reproaches to forbear: 985
They wound—they pierce me to the very heart!
We both have sinn'd—we both have God offended.
And oh! the dreadful consequences now
Are sad mementoes of our guilt and folly.
But our offended God—the righteous Judge, 990
Who thus takes vengeance on our sins, will still
With pity on our sufferings look down.
Oh yes, Almighty Father, thou art pleas'd
That sinners, in the midst of their affliction,
To thee their supplications may address— 995
Thou hast not utterly destroy'd mankind—
We live—still live, oh my beloved Eve!
For tho' this body sinks into the dust,
The soul survives; and if in virtue's paths

We persevere, then our immortal souls 1000
Shall be rewarded with eternal bliss!
We then shall face to face behold our God,
And praise incessantly his holy name!
Be this our consolation—our support!
But ah! my son fell by a brother's hand— 1005
Alas! my first-born hath his brother slain!"

"Yes, my beloved Abel," Eve rejoin'd,
While in more copious streams her tears ran down,
"A dreadful death hath from this world of woe
Releas'd thee—all thy sufferings are o'er. 1010
Ah! have not we, whom thou hast left behind
To struggle with inquietude and pain,
From which thou'rt now exempt, just cause to weep?
Yes, I must weep whene'er I call to mind
Thy matchless piety—thy filial love! 1015
Ah me! that form which once delighted all,
Behold! now lifeless and extended lies!
No longer the sweet smile of love adorns
His pallid cheeks—distain'd with his own blood;
No longer in angelic accents move 1020
Those lips, which were with holy ardor wont
To render thanks to God, and to express
The soft sensations of his tender heart;

No longer will those eyes, now fix'd in death,
With tears of joy—of pleasure overflow; 1025
For they, alas! no longer can behold
Th' ineffable delight—the ardent love
His spotless virtue kindled in our hearts.
Ah! Abel, my beloved son, thy death
A wretched parent ever must deplore! 1030
O sin, what odious forms dost thou assume,
And ev'ry form more hideous than the first.
My son! my son! I, thy unhappy mother,
The mother of thy murderer am too!
O misery extreme!—my son! my son!" 1035

Her speech now failing, on the corse again
She sank, and long insensible remain'd.

The melancholy silence Adam broke,
While with a sigh he heavily exclaim'd—

"Wretch that I am, abandon'd and forlorn, 1040
How desolate doth all around me seem—
Methinks o'er Nature misery hath spread
A mournful gloom, and she no longer smiles!
Oh Abel—oh my son—he's dead, alas!
Who was the joy—the comfort of my life: 1045

Yes, the support of all my hopes is dead!
What! gone for ever?—Oh! heart-breaking sight!
Alas! and was it Cain——tremendous thought!
A monster by all nature now abhorr'd!
O God, who this our misery beholdest, 1050
Forgive—forgive this our excessive grief:
Oh! pardon us, if in the dust we writhe
Like a poor worm (no better in thy sight)
That by the heedless passenger is trodden!"

As sorrow's statue on the moss-clad tomb, 1055
Or in the cypress-grove's dark solitude,
The father of mankind stood pale and mute.
His head was bow'd, and on the stiffen'd corse
His eyes were fix'd. A dreary silence reign'd.
At length he turn'd to Eve—her feeble hand 1060
Now from the lifeless body gently rais'd,
And press'd it, with emotion, to his heart;
Then, bending o'er her, tenderly he said—

"Awake, my wife—awake, my dearest Eve!
Look up to me—raise thy dejected eyes, 1065
Nor wash, with unavailing tears, the dust!
Ah! sink not thus beneath affliction's weight.
Has then thy sorrow for thy son destroy'd

All recollection of thy faithful husband—
All tenderness—all conjugal regard? 1070
Oh! raise thine eyes to me, beloved wife;
'Tis just that we shou'd feel—yes—keenly feel
The pangs of death; and, in their full extent,
Experience all the dreadful miseries—
The fatal consequences of our fall! 1075
But to give way thus to excessive grief,
And consolation stubbornly refuse,
Is criminal; implying the reproach,
That Everlasting Justice hath chastis'd
With more severity than we deserve! 1080
Oh! rouse then from this culpable despair,
My dearest Eve; lest the Almighty shou'd,
Offended at our persevering sorrow,
Withdraw the sources of consoling grace,
Which for unworthy sinners yet remain." 1085

Eve, turning from the corse her tearful eyes,
On Adam fix'd them now; then rais'd them high
To Heav'n—"Forgive me, O my God," she cried,
"Forgive a wretched sinner! Thou, my love,
My husband, pardon my excessive sorrow; 1090
For oh! unutterable is my grief.
Ah! my dear Adam, canst thou love me still—

Me, who seduc'd thee—me, the hateful cause
Of all this woe—of this unnatural murder—
This shedding of the blood of innocence? 1095
What! love me still!—Ah! let me bathe thy hand.
Oh! let me weep o'er my lost child again,
And mingle with his precious blood my tears!"
This said, the hand of her beloved Adam
She press'd with ardor to her moisten'd cheek. 1100

Thus bitterly lamented the first pair,
While 'gainst each other sadly they reclin'd;
When, casting suddenly his eyes around,
The pensive Adam at a distance saw
A heav'nly messenger approaching near; 1105
The fragrant flow'rs which sprang up as he trod
Denoted the light traces of his feet;
Peace sat on his celestial brow; his eyes
With sympathy and consolation beam'd;
While amity, and ev'ry tender passion, 1110
Were in his charming countenance portray'd:
A vesture white, and, than the silver clouds
Which the nocturnal planet veil, more bright,
Gracefully flow'd o'er his majestic form,
And in resplendent folds wav'd in the air. 1115

l. 1113.—Nocturnal planet, i.e. the moon.

Now the celestial messenger advanc'd,
While nature glow'd around with fresher verdure
By his exhilirating presence cheer'd.
The father of mankind then Eve address'd—

"Oh! my beloved, raise thy mournful eyes— 1120
Suppress the heaving sigh—restrain the tear—
See yonder angel that from Heav'n descends—
Oh! what benignity—what cheer—what love
In his celestial countenance appear!
Already thro' the gloom of misery 1125
A ray of holy consolation bursts—
Already more compos'd myself I feel—
Rise, my beloved, oh no longer weep;
Come, let us haste this messenger to meet."

Supported by her husband Eve arose, 1130
And the bright spirit now before them stood.
With fix'd attention for some time he gaz'd
On death's first victim; then, with look serene,
To Adam and his wife the angel turn'd.
A brighter light his radiance all around 1135
Diffus'd, which on their countenance now shone:
While, in melodious accents, thus he said—

"Hail! wretched parents, you who o'er the dust
Of your departed son lament, all hail!
To visit you in this your keen distress, 1140
By the permission of the Lord, I come.
Not one of all the tutelary beings,
Who hover round th' inhabitants of earth,
Could Abel love more tenderly than I.
When summon'd not away by God's command, 1145
Continually I by his side remain'd—
Oft when his mind, delighted with the love
Of virtue, rapturous effusions vented
In hymns of praise, which the surrounding angels
Disdain'd not in grand chorus to repeat, 1150
Did I with heav'nly thoughts the youth inspire—
Such as th' embodied soul is capable
Of understanding.——Weep not in despair—
Weep not in comfortless despondency,
As if his soul were, like his body, dead. 1155
Immod'rate grief ill suits immortal spirits;
Your son is happy—he's for ever bless'd—
Death hath releas'd him from th' oppressive chains
Of frail mortality—his virtue, sense,
Religion—all are render'd now complete. 1160
His happiness, before the throne of God,
With angels and archangels, far exceed

The comprehension of the human mind,
Or all imagination can conceive!
Yes—weep, my friends, for he deserv'd your love—
Lament his loss, but not with hopeless grief— 1166
Still be consol'd—he is not lost for ever!
Your separation's but for a short time—
Death soon shall call you to rejoin your son—
Hereafter you shall meet, to part no more! 1170
'Tis true, Death will appear in diff'rent forms;
But candidates for everlasting bliss
Will hail him as a long-expected friend!
Attend, O Adam, to thy God's command—
Restore this mouldering body to the dust— 1175
Go, dig a pit, and cover it with earth."

He said—Again the mournful pair he view'd
With such benignity—such soothing love—
The sympathetic tenderness, which mark'd
His ev'ry look, to their distracted souls 1180
The balm of solace instantly convey'd.

Thus from the limpid stream the cooling draught
Invigorates the weary traveller,
Who, 'mid the arid sands of burning deserts
Long having wander'd, is, with parching thirst 1185

Exhausted—languid! Suddenly he sees
A silver current—joyfully he hastes—
Drinks of the stream, and on the bank reclines.
Thus rested—thus refresh'd, he now pursues
The murm'ring course, which to a country leads, 1190
Where Nature in her greatest beauty smiles;
And where, beneath his shade, the gen'rous host
With courtesy receives him, and provides
Refreshments the most grateful for his guest.

Now tranquilliz'd—with holy rapture fill'd, 1195
On the departing angel Adam gaz'd.

"Accept our grateful thanks, celestial friend,"
He cried—"How infinite thy goodness, Lord!
For ever praised be thy holy Name!
Still on the sinner thou vouchsaf'st to look, 1200
And send'st thy angels comfort to impart.
Shall we, who by thy presence are surrounded—
The objects of thy ever-tender mercies—
Whose ev'ry sigh the hov'ring angels mark,
And remedies for ev'ry want provide— 125
Shall we, like spirits banish'd and condemn'd,
Despond, and mourn for ever in the dust—
We, who're permitted to adore thy name—

To praise thy wisdom—to implore thy grace—
Shall we, ennobled thus, dare to repine— 1210
To murmur at thy dispensations just?
Oh! shall our souls, destin'd for endless bliss,
All solace stubbornly refuse, because
This our short passage to eternity
Is by the briars of affliction strew'd? 1215
Some tears, indeed, must flow for the dear youth
So suddenly from our embraces snatch'd;
But how much more ought we, our tears and pray'rs
For the unhappy sinner offer up—
For him, by whom this guiltless blood was shed? 1220
Oh! what alleviation to our grief,
Cou'd we presume to hope, Almighty God,
Thy mercy had not cast him off for ever!
Alas! the first fruit of my loins is he—
The first, whom my belov'd with pain brought forth—
Let us not cease, dear partner of my sorrows, 1225
To supplicate the Lord in his behalf!
Can we his goodness doubt, when we ourselves,
Unworthy his protection by our fall,
Experienc'd his compassionating grace— 1230
When we his cheering promises receiv'd,
Whilst shock'd with the conviction of our guilt.
Not mercy—condemnation we expected?

ACCOMPANIED BY EVE, HE BEARS AWAY THE BODY OF HIS SON.

But, my beloved, let us not delay
To execute the mandate of the Lord— 1235
The body to our cottage I will bear,
And then to earth the precious dust commit."

"Oh Adam, my dear husband," Eve return'd,
"My soul superior to her sorrows rises—
Now by thy fortitude—thy firmer virtue, 1240
Myself shall I support, as the weak ivy,
Which to the stubborn oak securely clings."

The wretched Adam on his shoulder plac'd
The corse, and with the melancholy load
Proceeded, sighing, towards the huts; while Eve, 1245
Suffus'd in tears, walk'd slowly by his side.

END OF THE FOURTH CANTO.

CANTO THE FIFTH.

ARGUMENT.

Thirza, alarmed by dreams, seeks her husband—She meets her sister—Their conversation—Thirza's apprehensions on hearing distant cries of mourning—Adam appears carrying the body of Abel—Lamentations of Thirza and her sister—Adam endeavours to console his daughters—Eve confesses the murder—Consequent anguish of Cain's wife, and Abel's—Adam prepares the grave—Cain's sons, Eliel and Josiah, accidentally come, and are shocked at seeing the corps—Thirza comforted by a vision—Abel's body interred—Adam's prayer—Cain's despondency—He passes a bower planted by his brother, and flees in terror—Approaches the cottages—Hears the voice of mourning—Is startled by a footstep, and conceals himself—Thirza visits her husband's grave—Her lamentations and prayer—Cain affected by them—His determination to retire from society—Goes to take a last farewell of his wife and children—Mahala's distress—She resolves to accompany her husband, and to take her children with her—Cain's repentance—Their departure to solitude.

THE

DEATH OF ABEL.

CANTO V.

Now Thirza, who, by terrifying dreams,
All night had been disturb'd, with morn awak'd,
And quitted hastily her couch of skins—
So starts th' affrighted traveller, when he,
Exhausted with fatigue, his wearied limbs 5
Beneath an over-arching rock had laid,
And, by his guardian angel now inspir'd,
Lo! a terrific vision represents
The craggy mass descending on his head—
He, trembling, quits the place—the pond'rous rock 10
Falls with a dreadful crash, while he, alas!
The partner of his toilsome journey seeks,
Unconscious that he's crush'd beneath the ruins!

THIRZA, ALARMED BY DREAMS, SEEKS HER HUSBAND.

The wife of Abel was no less dismay'd—
"What frightful images—what horrid phantoms, 15
Which I'm unable to describe," she said,
"Have pass'd before me in my gloomy dreams!
O welcome, cheering light, thou hast dispers'd them—
Welcome, ye flow'rs, sweet objects of my care!
Your mingled odours, which the sun exhales, 20
My drooping spirits shall revive—and you,
Ye gay inhabitants of th' ambient air,
Shall with your strains compose my ruffled mind—
With your soft melody my voice shall join—
In concert with all renovated Nature 25
My praises and thanksgivings shall ascend!
Laud, O my soul, thy Maker and Preserver,
Tho' thy most hearty adorations must
His mercies but imperfectly express!
Laud Him, whose ever-wakeful providence 30
Protects his creatures, wheresoe'er they are,
When Night her sable mantle draws around,
And Sleep their ev'ry faculty suspends—
Yes, I will join with Nature in thy praise;
May thou, O God, my humble thanks accept!" 35

Her dwelling she had left, and now she walk'd
Among the op'ning flow'rs, whose early sweets
Were by the morning zephyrs wide diffus'd.

"Alas!" she cried, "alas! my heart still throbs—
Anxiety my bosom still oppresses— 40
Whence this solicitude, so strange and new—
This nameless something, gloomy as the clouds,
When they like mountains overcast th' horizon,
When joy no longer fills the heart, and when
The awe-struck earth th' approaching storm awaits? 45
Where art thou, my beloved—O my brother—
My other and my dearer self, where art thou?
Pursued by gloomy fears—lo! to thy arms
With all the speed of a benighted trav'ller
I haste, when, 'mid the dreary solitude 50
Of a wide forest, terror gives him wings."

This said, she hasten'd on, and soon she met
Mahala, who her cottage just had left.

"Welcome, my dearest sister," said Mahala—
"Whither so fast with thy loose-flowing tresses, 55
Now unadorn'd by ev'n a single flow'r?"

Then Thirza—"Oh! I haste to throw myself
Into the arms of my beloved Abel—
Unusual terrors have my sleep disturb'd—
The recollection of them still gives pain, 60

Nor can the charms of this delightful morn
Dispel them from my mind; I, therefore, haste—
To my beloved haste, in whose embrace
All gloomy apprehensions will subside,
Tho' blooming spring—tho' all the smiles of Nature 65
Are now inadequate to chase them hence!"

Then, with a sigh, the wife of Cain exclaim'd—

"Ah! happy—happy sister—I, alas!
Have no such sweet resource—Where cou'd I hope
For consolation in the hour of grief, 70
Were it not in th' affection of our parents,
In thine, dear sister, and the tender Abel's?
To thee I can in confidence disclose
The cares—the sorrows, which Cain's discontent
Continually heaps on my wretched head! 75
To him all the bewitching charms of Nature
Are only sources of uneasiness—
The very labor which his fields require,
And which by them's abundantly repaid,
To him's intolerable drudgery! 80
But, ah! my dearest Thirza, above all
His fix'd—his rooted enmity to Abel,
So good—so virtuous—afflicts my heart!"

Mahala wept, while Thirza, in whose eyes
Tears also trembled, tenderly embrac'd her. 85

"My dearest—dearest sister," she rejoin'd,
"How oft, alas! doth that reflection pain,
With bitter anguish, mine and Abel's heart!
Oft, in the sleepless hours of night, our pray'rs—
Our ardent supplications we address 90
To God in his behalf—oh! may a beam
Of his enlight'ning grace disperse the gloom
That thickens in his bosom, and promotes
Those baleful weeds, which all his virtues choak;
Then, my dear sister, peace and happiness 95
Again wou'd flourish in our humble dwellings;
Then, from our venerable father's brow
Wou'd care be chas'd, and our fond mother's eyes
No longer be with tears of sorrow fill'd."

"Alas," replied Mahala, still in tears, 100
"Such many a midnight hour's my ardent pray'r:
When darkness veils the earth—all nature hush'd—
In secret anguish, I lift up my hands
Towards Heav'n, and fervently invoke my God
To soften the obdurate heart of Cain. 105
While thus I pray, sometimes my swelling grief,

Emitting sudden sobs and groans, awakes him,
And in a voice of thunder he complains
I banish rest—drive away balmy sleep,
The only blessing he, as he declares, 110
On this unhappy earth enjoys—this earth
By the Avenger so severely curs'd!
Ah! Thirza, while domestic occupations
My hands employ, thus is my mind engag'd.
My little innocents, around me playing, 115
Observe my tears; they tenderly caress me,
And ask, in lisping accents, why I weep.
Alas! beloved sister, by my grief
I fade away, as doth the drooping flow'r,
From which some rude—some over-hanging tree 120
By its wide-spreading foliage intercepts
The genial sunshine and refreshing dew.
This very morn, ere dawn, my wretched husband
Our cottage quitted; never, as I thought,
Did such a settled melancholy gloom 125
His countenance obscure, while from his eyes,
Which glar'd beneath his now-contracted brows,
Fierce anger flash'd.——He curs'd, as he went forth—
I heard him, sister, and was terrified—
He curs'd his birth—Ah! such the salutation, 130
With which he greeted this delightful morn!

But let me not despair, for true it is,
(As thou, my dearest Thirza, hast observ'd,)
That thro' the gloom his virtue sometimes breaks;
Then is his heart to soft sensations open— 135
Then weeps he—then acknowledges his errors,
Implores forgiveness, and our favor seeks:
But soon this light of virtue disappears;
As, in the dark tempestuous days of winter,
The sun darts forth a cheering ray, and quick 140
The gath'ring clouds his radiance intercepts.
Yet still—oh! still I cherish the fond hope,
For which incessantly to God I'll pray,
That a mild spring we may at length enjoy,
Which will not only dissipate those clouds, 145
But pleasure and serenity restore."

She said—when Thirza, whose attention had
By distant sounds some moments been attracted,
Now pale became, and, trembling, thus exclaim'd—

"What cries are these, which issue from yon thicket?
They're not the cries of pain—but, ah! the cries 151
Of lamentation—lamentation too
Exceeding all which I have ever heard!

Again!—Hark, sister—among yonder trees:
Ah me! the sounds reach nearer—see!——O God!"

Mahala, equally alarm'd, supported 156
The sinking Thirza in her trembling arms.

With tardy steps, the father of mankind
Now from behind the shady trees advanc'd.
His son's remains he on his shoulder bore, 160
And bent beneath the melancholy load;
Beside him follow'd Eve, who oft her face,
Expressive of the bitt'rest anguish, rais'd
To view the bleeding corse, and then as oft
Conceal'd it in her tresses, wet with tears. 165

Now Thirza, pale as death and motionless,
Still on Mahala's trembling arms reclin'd,
Till she, becoming equally as faint,
No longer cou'd her sister's weight sustain.

As when three maidens, virtuous as fair, 170
United by the bonds of pure affection,
On a mild summer's ev'ning, hand in hand,
Perambulate the meadows—o'er their heads
All suddenly the awful thunder bursts—

The lightning strikes them senseless to the earth: 175
Two of them from their lethargy awake,
And with alarm—with consternation see
Their partner dear to ashes now reduc'd!

Thus Adam's daughters—when their eyes they open'd,
With equal consternation they beheld 180
The corse of their belov'd and murder'd Abel:
Their wretched sire had plac'd it on the turf,
And was supporting his now-fainting wife.

"Where am I!" Thirza cried—"Ah! how he lies—
Dear Abel! Abel!—Why did I awake? 185
O hateful light! Still, sister, he lies there—
Wretch that I am—he's dead—alas! he's dead!
Oh! hateful light—why—why did I awake?"

In trembling accents then Mahala said—
"Cease, my dear Thirza, with that dreadful thought
To terrify thyself—yes, dreadful thought! 191
It pierces me too like the forked lightning!
My dearest sister—ah! she sinks again—
Awake—Thirza awake! and let's approach him;
We have not yet experienc'd misery 195

In all its hideous forms—then, why despond?
He is not dead.——Let us approach him, sister;
Thy voice—thy fond embraces, will revive him."

Thus spake the sisters, while, aghast and faint,
With trembling steps and with enfeebled limbs, 200
Each other now supporting, they approach'd.

"Behold! how our dear parents stand and weep!
Ah me! what terrors seize me!" Thirza said,
As towards the lifeless body she advanc'd.
"O Abel! Abel!—my beloved Abel— 205
My happiness—my life—my all—awake!
Ah! thou awakest not—distressing sight!
Oh Abel! listen to my plaintive cries!
Oh! hear the voice of thy distracted wife!"

This said, she threw herself beside the corse 210
To give her lifeless husband an embrace;
But started back with a tremendous scream,
When she beheld the wound—the clotted blood,
Which so disfigur'd his once lovely face.
Insensible and speechless she remain'd, 215
Pale as the sculptur'd marble, while despair
Appear'd in her now fix'd and open eyes.

Beside her, on the earth, Mahala wept;
Her hands and streaming eyes to Heav'n she rais'd,
And with her tears the bloody body bath'd. 220

Now Adam, sympathizing with their grief,
Attempted thus his daughters to console—

"Beloved children! wou'd to Heav'n I could
Remove the anguish, which now rends the hearts
Of those I love—O Thirza, O Mahala, 225
Restrain the violence of your affliction—
Be comforted—for know, my dearest daughters,
While Eve and I lamented the deceas'd,
An angel, beaming with celestial charms,
To us with consolation came from Heav'n. 230
'Weep not,' said he—'check this excessive grief,
And to the earth commit this mould'ring clay.
Freed from the fetters of mortality,
His soul eternal happiness enjoys—
Eternal happiness, which far exceeds 235
The comprehension of the human mind.
Your separation's but for a short time.
In the abodes of everlasting bliss
Hereafter you shall meet to part no more.
O, my beloved daughters, let's not then 240

The memory of the now happy dead
By inconsolable affliction wrong.
Oh! let us not, by obstinate despair—
By wanton grief, the King of Heav'n offend."

Still motionless and silent Thirza sat. 245
While, clenching fast her hands above her head,
The wife of Cain her sorrows vented thus—

"O father, father, suffer us to weep.
Alas! who can refrain from tears, when he,
Who was our consolation—our delight, 250
Before us lies extended, cold and dead?
O Abel—oh my brother, we have lost thee!
And, till the hour of death, our sweet employ
Shall be to weep and to bewail our loss.
Yes, thou hast enter'd that delightful state 255
Of endless glory and beatitude,
Where, with angels and archangels, thou
In hallelujahs wilt for ever join—
That state of everlasting bliss, for which
Thy pious soul, while here on earth embodied, 260
With holy ardor panted; and to which,
We, whom thou'st left behind, with lively hope

Look forward, when th' Almighty shall be pleas'd
To call us from this life of wretchedness;
More wretched now, since thee, alas! we've lost. 265
Oh! Abel—oh my brother, we are left
Thy premature departure to lament—
Alas! we're left behind to weep for thee:
And, till the wish'd-for hour of death arrive,
To weep for thee shall be our sweet employ! 270
Where wast thou, Cain, when Abel breath'd his last?
Ah! my dear Cain, had'st thou been present then,
Thy dying brother with fraternal love
T' embrace, and his last blessing to implore,
His languid arms he wou'd have thrown around thee,
And press'd thee to his heart; his quiv'ring lips 276
The parting benediction would have giv'n—
Ah me! what sweet—what soothing consolation;
The recollection of his dying love
Wou'd have diffus'd o'er all thy future days! 280
But see—my mother!—Gracious Heav'n, she faints—
Oh! what new anguish overcomes her thus?
My father, too!—Speak—I conjure thee tell
Why horror thus thy countenance o'erspreads. 284
Oh! my foreboding heart!—dear father—mother—
Where—where is Cain—where is my husband, say?"

Now Eve, recov'ring from her feeble state,
With falt'ring tongue replied—"Ah! where indeed?
Where hath eternal wrath the wretch pursu'd?
Unhappy mother that I am!—'twas he—— 290
But no—Oh let the black—infernal deed,
Within my bosom be a secret lodg'd;
And there alone the pains of hell inflict.
Ah miserable me!—must I—must I——"

"Speak out, and spare me not," Mahala cried, 295
"Speak out, dear mother, let me know the worst—
The full extent of my calamity;
On me let the now raging tempest fall!
Already frightful apprehensions shake
My troubled soul. Oh! I conjure thee, speak! 300
What of my husband?—What of wretched Cain?"

"'Twas he—'twas he——unutterable woe!
Alas! Mahala—Thirza—it was Cain
Who murder'd Abel—who his brother kill'd."
Here ceas'd their mother; for excessive grief 305
The pow'r of further utterance denied.

Now silent horror thrill'd the wife of Cain.
From her fix'd eye no tear escap'd cold damps

Her brow bedew'd—her trembling lips grew pale—
At length she echo'd—" Cain his brother kill'd! 310
My husband kill'd his brother—murder'd Abel!
Oh misery!——Where art thou, fratricide?
Oh! whither—whither hath thy crime pursued thee?
Detested murd'rer, hath th' Almighty's thunder
Aveng'd already thy dear brother's fall? 315
Art thou no more? Where art thou, wretched man!
Oh! whither by despair hast thou been driv'n?"
Thus rav'd Mahala, while her locks she tore.

The widow'd Thirza loudly then exclaim'd—
" O thou base fratricide, how coud'st thou kill 320
A brother so affectionate and good,
Who, doubtless, at the time of dissolution,
Regarded thee with eyes of tender love?
Wretch that thou art, oh! cursed—cursed be——"

" Hold——Curse him not," Mahala interrupted—
" Oh! Thirza, my dear sister, curse him not: 326
Thy brother he—alas! my husband too!
Ah! let us for the sinner rather pray—
No doubt the pious victim of his rage,
When, bleeding, at his murd'rer's feet he fell, 330
Beheld him with an eye of soft compassion,

And bless'd the criminal before he died.
Ev'n now he for the sinner intercedes
Before the throne of the Eternal King!
Oh! let our pray'rs then from the earth ascend— 335
Let them unite with those of the now-bless'd!
Ah! sister, curse him not—he's still thy brother!"

Then Thirza answer'd—"Whither doth th' excess
Of anguish hurry me? I have not curs'd him—
I meant not the unhappy man to curse." 340

Then on the stiff-extended corse she sank;
The blood-stain'd cheeks and the cold lips she kiss'd,
And long in speechless agony remain'd—
At length, in broken accents, thus she said—

"O my beloved Abel, wou'd to Heav'n 345
I had been near thee, when thou 'hadst breath'd thy last,
Once more to 've kiss'd thy pallid lips—once more
A declaration of thy love to 've heard—
That from thy closing lips I had receiv'd
A parting glance—had had a last embrace, 350
And died myself within thy folding arms!
Oh! that beside thy pale and mangled corse

My lifeless body also lay extended!
But no—alas! alas! I'm left behind—
Left to endure unutterable anguish! 355
Ah! ev'ry object that was wont to charm
Will only aggravate my sorrow now.
Ye verdant bow'rs, no longer your retreats
Will give me joy; for your green twilight now
Will seem to ask me, Where—oh! where is he, 360
Who oft beneath our shades with tender rapture
Hath press'd thee to his heart? The wand'ring streams
Will also murmur to me—Wretched Thirza,
Where now is thy belov'd—thy faithful Abel?
Thus destitute, what pleasure can I taste? 365
Ye bow'rs—ye streams, how hateful you will be,
While in your shades and on your banks, alas!
My ceaseless lamentations I shall breathe!
Oh! he is lost; and I no more shall see
With fond delight the object of my love! 370
Yes—I shall see, indeed—distressing thought!—
I still shall see these fix'd and sightless eyes—
I still shall see this ghastly countenance—
This clotted blood, which stains his pallid cheeks—
This dreadful wound!——For ever flow my tears— 375
Oh! flow for ever on his faded form!
Ah me! what dignity—what heav'nly grace,

Once in this senseless dust were to be seen!
There virtue in her mildest form appear'd;
In the mild lustre of his eyes she beam'd, 380
Smil'd on his cheeks, and play'd too on his lips!
But, ah! his soul—too pure to be with mortals—
Too blest—too holy to commune with me,
To Heav'n is fled—then flow—oh! flow my tears—
For ever flow on his now-faded form— 385
Till her vile dust my longing soul forsake,
To be for ever with my love united!"

Thus Thirza mourn'd, and o'er the corse she wept.

Eve, with augmented anguish, now beheld
Her daughters' grief, and tenderly exclaim'd— 390

"Ah! my beloved children, how your sorrow
Encreases mine—your tears, your sighs, your groans
Oppress my heart—they bitterly reproach me—
Me, the unhappy cause of all this pain—
Me, by whose disobedience sin and death 395
Were introduc'd.—Oh! cease then these reproaches.
Forgive, dear daughters, your afflicted mother!
Ah! I implore you, children, to forgive
Her, who has brought you forth with so much pain."

Now on the earth the sisters threw themselves, 400
And pressing tenderly their mother's knees,
With looks of dutiful affection said—

"Oh! we conjure thee by the pangs of travail,
Endur'd for us—by all those tender cares,
Which guarded us in helpless infancy, 405
Forbear these harsh reflections, ah! forbear
By new complaints to add to our distress!
O thou, who'st brought us forth with so much pain,
Imagine not, that by our sighs—our tears
We dare our mother to reproach—Oh, no! 410
We honor—we sincerely love thee still:
Cou'd we command our sorrow, not a sigh
Should issue from our bosom—not a tear
Make damp our cheek; but, how can we resist
The sudden impulse of imperious Nature? 415
Oh! mother, mother, how can we restrain
These fond expressions of unbounded love?
Alas! 'tis nature bids our tears to flow!"

While still Eve's knees they tenderly embrac'd,
And while on her their tearful eyes were fix'd, 420
The father of mankind address'd them thus—

"Beloved, we no longer must defer
The execution of the Lord's command.
This faded form, the object of our tears,
Now to its native earth we must restore. 425
The lenient hand of Time will, be assured,
Abate our grief; and Reason will assist
In triumphing o'er unavailing sorrow!
Then, to partake the joys of the deceas'd,
Our longing like the longing of a bride 430
Will be, who anxiously awaits the day,
Which is to give her to the bridegroom's arms."

Then Thirza, turning round her pallid face,
On Adam fix'd her weeping eyes, and said—

"Yes, father, to the earth, from whence it sprang,
Restore this precious form; but, ere 'tis hid— 436
For ever hid—Oh! suffer me once more
To bathe it with my tears—once more to press
This clay-cold body to my throbbing heart!"
While utt'ring this, she with extended arms 440
Again sank weeping on the mangled corse.

Now Adam to prepare the grave began,
While by his side Eve and Mahala stood,

Dissolv'd in tears. In the mean time approach'd
With timid step the infant sons of Cain, 445
Who, hand in hand, had from their cottage stray'd.

"My dear Josiah, whence those cries of grief?"
The golden-hair'd Eliel now exclaim'd—
"Come, my dear brother, nearer let's approach—
Ah me! behold, how Abel yonder lies!— 450
How pale, alas!—his hair with blood is stain'd!—
He looks, my dear Josiah, like a lamb,
That for a sacrifice has just been slaughter'd."

l. 445.—These sons of Cain are ingeniously introduced to increase the interest of this Canto, which, indeed, required some novelty to engage the reader's attention, as the preceding book, containing the death of Abel, may be said to finish the story. The eldest son, Eliel, has been already mentioned, in Cain's vision, (Canto IV. *l.* 103,) and in the conclusion of this Canto, Cain we find is the father of two others. Our poet has also made Thirza a mother, as will be found in this Canto, *l.* 881, &c. and Abel's son is the youth, who, as Cain in his dream thought, addressed the assembly, Canto IV. *l.* 172. Some may ask, why did not the author give Thirza more than one child, or why not introduce her son here in company with Cain's, which would have heightened this interesting scene? If we suppose her only son to be a suckling, we must think it strange that his mother did not bring him with her; and, particularly, that she left him unprotected in the dead of night, *l.* 857, &c. In drawing the feelings of a wife, our poet has unfortunately overlooked the feelings of a mother; this should have been her consolation, when left a widow: and it is much to be regretted, as Thirza is a character of the poet's invention, that in her sorrow she never once thinks of her child. In scripture we find Cain had a wife, though her name is not recorded; but there is no mention of his having a son till after his pilgrimage.—Gen. iv. 17.

"And see, Eliel," young Josiah cried—
"Oh! see how Thirza o'er him weeps, and yet 455
He heeds her not—he disregards her tears!
I shudder at the sight—Oh! let us haste—
To our dear mother haste—she also weeps."

Now to Mahala both the children ran,
And, clinging round her, fearfully enquir'd— 460

"Ah! mother—mother, why do you all weep?
Oh! wherefore like a lamb for sacrifice
Doth our dear Abel there, disfigur'd, lie?"

O'er the sweet innocents Mahala wept,
And, tenderly embracing them, replied— 465

"Ah! my dear boys, this is the work of death:
His soul, which from the body's now divided,
Is carried up to Heav'n—eternal bliss
With God and the archangels to enjoy."

Eliel, bursting into tears, rejoin'd— 470
"Oh! then, he never—never will awake—
Ah, brother, we shall never see him more—
Shall never hear him sing his pretty hymns.

He, who so dearly lov'd us—he, who us'd
To take us on his knees, and speak so much 475
Of God—of angels, and of Nature's wonders—
Alas! he never—never will awake!
Oh! when our father from the field returns,
How will he weep for Abel, now so pale!"

The infant sons of Cain thus prattled forth 480
Their artless sorrow—terrified, they wept,
And clinging to their mother, in the folds
Of her loose vest their little faces hid.

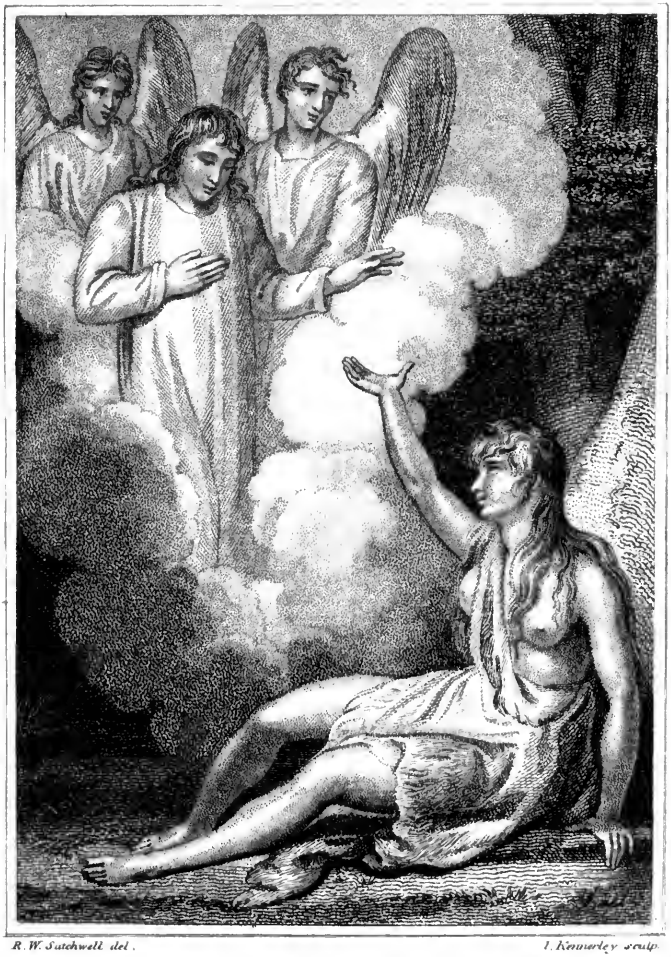
The father of mankind the grave had made—
"Awake, awake, dear Thirza—oh! awake, 485
And to the earth let us this dust commit—
Awake, beloved—let us not delay
To execute the will of the Most High,"
He said, and tenderly her hand he took
To raise the fair, for on her husband's corse 490
She all this while had motionless reclin'd,
And from a holy vision now awoke!

"I've seen him," she exclaim'd—"Oh! yes, I've seen him,
Array'd in heav'nly splendor he appear'd,

And to me thus in soothing accents said— 495
'Weep not, beloved, for I now am bless'd—
Ere long in the abodes of endless bliss
Thou thy delighted Abel shalt rejoin,
And death shall never separate us more!'
As he address'd me, a benignant smile 500
Beam'd on his lovely face, and, when retiring,
His footsteps a celestial radiance mark'd."
While this she utter'd, consolation sweet
Her countenance illumin'd—"Now restore—
Yes, my dear father, now restore this dust— 505
This mould'ring body to its native earth,"
She said, and quitting instantly the corse,
Beside her mother and her sister stood.

Eve and her daughters with their flowing locks
Their faces hid, while Adam, weeping still, 510
The body wrapp'd in skins; then to the pit
Committing it, thereon the earth he threw,
And to his weeping wife and daughters said—

"Beloved Eve—O my dear children, now
Our solemn supplications let's address 515
To God—around the first-made grave let's kneel."



R. W. Satchwell del. I. Knowerley sculp.

"Weep not, beloved, for I now am bless'd" — — —

CANTO V. line 496

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They all obey'd—nay, ev'n the sons of Cain,
Eliel and Josiah, on each side
Of their afflicted mother humbly knelt,
While, on his breast his hands devoutly folding, 520
The father of mankind this pray'r pronounc'd—

"O Thou, who dwellest in the highest Heav'n,
Almighty—Everlasting God!—Creator!
Whose justice and whose mercy are alike
Eternal—infinite!—Before the grave 525
Of the first dead, we, sinners, in the dust
To thee our supplications offer up!
Oh! to thy throne may these our pray'rs ascend—
Vouchsafe, O Lord, with pity to look down
On this abode of sin—this vale of death! 530
Great our iniquities—oh! great, indeed—
But greater still is thy eternal mercy!
What are we, wretched sinners, in thy sight?
Yet, tho' polluted—tho' impure, from us
Thy countenance thou turnest not away! 535
We daily groan under the load of grief,
Which we, alas! have brought on our own heads;
And still thou lookest with compassion down
On our affliction—thou permitt'st us still
Our supplications to address to Thee, 540

For thou hast not abandon'd sinful man!
Thy works, Almighty, render thee due praise;
The beauties of the spring—the sky serene,
Thy loving kindness show—the rolling thunder,
Which from the gath'ring clouds tremendous bursts,
Thy majesty declares—the howling storm— 546
The jarring elements, thy pow'r proclaim!
Oh! let the smile of joy—the tear of grief,
Thy mercy and thy justice glorify!
Grim Death, that child of Sin, we've now beheld— 550
Our dwelling he, in a terrific form,
Hath visited.—Guilt led him by the hand—
Black tempests gather'd round them—the earth groan'd!
The first fruit of my loins—ah! my soul shakes—
My first-born son a brother's blood hath shed! 555
Oh! turn not, Lord, thy countenance from me,
While here for the offender I presume
To supplicate thy mercy.—O my God,
Th' unhappy sinner cast not off for ever—
Look down—look down upon him, that his soul 560
May loathe the crime—that, humbled in the dust,
He may before thee his offence bewail,
And with the tears of deep contrition seek
Thy mercy and forgiveness, gracious God!
When, with remorse and anguish overwhelm'd, 565

He supplicates thy pardon, deign to shed
A beam of consolation on the wretch—
Commiserate his suff'rings—oh! vouchsafe
To hear his pray'rs, and to preserve his soul!
Reject not, Lord!—reject not my petition! 570
Lo! thy divine injunction I've obey'd,
And to the earth, now moisten'd with our tears,
The body of the murder'd I've committed.
Almighty Father, hear our supplications,
Which from the grave of the first dead—of him, 575
Who to his parent earth hath first return'd,
To thee we now address.—Oh! hear us, Lord,
When in the sleepless midnight hour to thee
We pray—when, at the rising of the sun,
And at the going down too of the same, 580
Our fervent orisons to thee ascend—
Eternal praises be to thee, O God,
Who hast receiv'd the soul of the deceas'd
Into the regions of ne'er ceasing bliss!
Death his first victim hath secur'd; and him 585
We all shall follow to the silent grave:
But—Glory be to the Most High for this
His clemency! him we shall also follow
To immortality—to endless joy!
O Thou, whose *fiat* all the Heav'ns created, 590

And at whose nod the universe arose,
Tho' they shall perish—tho' the Heav'ns—the Earth
Shall pass away, still thou Eternal art!
In bodies of vile dust we dwell, which dust
Shall be dissolv'd; but thou art still the same, 595
And to eternal glory thou wilt raise
The sinner, who bewails his crimes—the man
Who grieves, because his virtues are imperfect—
Because by human frailties they are sullied.
These thou wilt gather from the dust—all these 600
Wilt elevate to everlasting bliss—
To purity—angelic purity;
For, oh! delightful promise—words of cheer—
The woman's seed shall crush the serpent's head!
Rejoice, O Earth—all Nature praise the Lord! 605
Yes, tho' we sink beneath a weight of sorrow,
Still we will glorify his holy name.
How man hath fall'n—how from the dignity
Of his orig'nal nature hath he fall'n!
Yet God hath not for ever cast him off; 610
Ev'n from the seat of judgment he looks down
With tender mercy on degraded man!
He fell, whom the Creator made upright;
And, when he fell—when, trembling before God,
With the most piercing anguish he awaited 615

The sentence of an everlasting curse—
For oh! what less cou'd he expect—what less
Than endless woe—eternal punishment?
And yet——Oh! let all Nature celebrate
The great, sublime, consoling, mystery!— 620
Th' Almighty graciously was pleas'd to say—
The woman's seed shall crush the serpent's head.
What! tho' this glorious mystery—this promise,
Be in a sacred darkness still wrapt up,
Impenetrable to all finite beings; 625
Yet to the sinner 'tis sweet consolation,
It gives him hopes of yet enjoying peace,
Of being to his Maker reconcil'd.
Shall we then in the dust profanely mourn—
Shall we, base sinners, impiously despond, 630
Because this life, which passeth like a dream,
Alternately with joy and grief is fill'd?
From all the fetters of mortality—
The sad effects of a just malediction,
Death will the soul release—then they, who have, 635
While here embodied, virtue's paths pursu'd—
They who have lov'd with honest zeal their God—
That God all-merciful, who by his grace
Hath kindled in their hearts the sacred flame,

Shall be assembled in th' abodes of bliss! 640
Oh now—ev'n now, doth my prophetic eye
The veil of blest futurity pierce thro'—
I see—I see all those, who from the earth
Death has remov'd—a countless multitude,
Pure as the flames on the celestial altars— 645
I see them in the mansions of the happy,
Surrounded by innumerable angels!
They stand before the throne of the Most High,
And their incessant hallelujahs sing!
Transporting prospect!—how my soul is rais'd!— 650
Raptures unknown before my heart expand!
Oh boundless love!—unutterable grace!
In sacred transport I am lost—in joy,
Which I can only feel, but not express!"

Here Adam ceas'd; and, prostrate on the earth, 655
In silent ecstacy continued long.
His wife and daughters, still upon their knees,
In mute devotion round the grave remain'd.
Surrounding Nature, too, the solemn scene
With awful silence hallow'd—not a cloud 660
Across the azure sky was seen to pass.

Mild ev'ning, clad in sober grey, soon came,
When silence reign'd throughout—when all was calm,
Save agitated Cain, by guilt pursu'd.
He, full of anguish, horror, and remorse, 665
Had wander'd through the wilderness: at length,
Exhausted with fatigue, upon the earth
Himself he cast; and, viewing with fix'd eyes
The rising moon, with a terrific voice
Thus the prevailing stillness interrupted— 670

"There! 'bove yon gloomy mountain, the full moon,
Which thro' the dusky sky begins her course,
Sheds brightness and serenity around.
All—all beneath Heav'n's starry firmament
Breathe silence and repose—Man only wakes! 675
My cursed hand hath banish'd peace and rest!
The voice of misery—of lamentation,
From ev'ry habitation now ascends!
'Tis I—wretch that I am!—'tis I who've brought

l. 662.—Though Adam and his wife, and Thirza and her sister, left their dwellings early in the morning, we must suppose, that the time was chiefly spent in lamentations, and that Abel was not interred till mid-day. We must also suppose, that they quitted the grave before the time now mentioned.

l. 678.—There were only three dwellings at this time, as represented by our poet, which were inhabited by each couple—viz. Adam and Eve, Cain and Mahala, Abel and Thirza.

This great affliction into their abodes! 680
These cries of bitter agony—these groans,
Which now resound in the nocturnal air,
To Heav'n arise and call down vengeance on me!
This day——hear it, ye stars, and set in darkness—
Hear it, thou moon, and still more pale become— 685
Hear it, and hide thy beams—for, on this day—
On this accursed day, thy sister Earth
Hath drunk the blood of the first-slain—hath drunk
A brother's blood, shed by a brother's hand!
Henceforth, ye luminaries, one and all, 690
Your genial influence from me withhold—
Withhold it from the field I cultivate—
Withhold it from the ground on which I tread!

l. 690 to 719.—Here is an admirable picture of despair, and indeed of the aberrations of human nature. Cain, conscious that he is forsaken by God, (*l.* 737, 8, 9,) and abhorred by man, (*l.* 1141 and 1164,) apprehends that all nature will shun him, (*l.* 698—9), that the very reptiles, birds, and beasts of prey, will detest him (*l.* 710), and that even in gloomy solitude he must be miserable, as dreadful dreams, whenever sleep overcomes him, will incessantly remind him of his guilt, (*l.* 716—19). The poet, however, gives a happy turn to this despair, which we find is afterwards changed to plaintive sorrow, (*l.* 742—53); but, that this softened grief may appear more natural, he suffers him continually to relapse into his former despondency, (*l.* 758—760, 812—3, 1025—1037, &c.) till by well-contrived incidents, which call to his recollection the piety of Abel (*l.* 769,—784), and assure him of the affection of his sister Thirza, whom he had rendered a widow, (*l.* 893—903, and 1015—24) his sorrow at length becomes sincere: at the feet of the distracted Mahala he acknowledges his guilt (*l.* 1131—8); and his repentance is rewarded by the company of his wife and children into solitude.

Oh! I have shed a brother's blood—have griev'd
A father's heart—and fill'd with agony 695
The breast of her who brought me forth with pain!
Come, gloomy darkness, hide me from the eye
Of Nature—from the cheerful face of man!
Wrapt in thy sable mantle I will flee—
Flee with my misery—ah, sad companion!— 700
To some wild region where no human footstep
Was ever on the mould'ring grass imprinted—
There, among craggy rocks, will I reside;
Where putrid water trickles from the steeps
Into the swampy dens of loathsome reptiles; 705
Where, thickly interwoven 'bove my head,
The branches of high trees the light of Heav'n
Exclude; where birds of prey their nests provide;
Where savage beasts their bloody food devour:
But woe is me! ev'n these—these will abhor me! 710
They've kill'd no brothers!—they're no fratricides!
Oh! hide me, darkness, from the cheering sky—
Conceal me from the sight of every creature!
In gloomy solitude my days I'll pass;
And there bewail, with anguish and remorse, 715
My crime! When sleep my languid eyes o'ercomes,
Then, haunted by terrific images,

My murder'd brother I shall see before me—
Shall see his mangled head—his blood-stain'd locks!"

Thus rav'd the miserable sinner—thus 720
His lamentations pour'd he forth.——He ceas'd—
And long, in silent misery absorb'd,
Quite motionless remain'd—no bird of night
The melancholy stillness interrupted—
Affrighted at the cries of human woe, 725
They all had to a distance flown away:
A gentle murmur only floated round.

Now shuddering, again his eyes he rais'd,
And, gazing on the landscape, thus exclaim'd—

"Oh! pity me, ye hills; weep for me, groves; 730
Weep for a wretch, beyond expression wretched:
Sure misery like mine deserves compassion.
Weep for me, then, O lovely Nature, weep,
Tho' now, alas! I'm lost to all thy charms—
Commiserate me, silent witnesses 735
Of th' efficacious presence of a God
All-merciful—to me no longer so—
To me, alas! only a God of vengeance—

The just avenger of my brother's blood—
Wretch that I am, my punishment is endless!" 740

He paus'd—then, with a sigh, again began—

"Ah! now I weep—can such a wretch shed tears?
'Tis a relief, which long hath been denied me.
Oh! welcome, precious tears—flow, ever flow,
Sweet testimonies of my soften'd grief— 745
Despair to plaintive sorrow now is chang'd—
Flow tears—and, to receive them, thou, O Earth,
Tho' on thy surface I'm accurs'd, vouchsafe—
Receive them, tho' thou'st drunk my brother's blood—
Receive these tokens of excessive sorrow— 750
Of misery ineffable!——Ah me!
What new emotions—what sensations rise?
How my heart melts—my tears too faster flow—
Oh! yes—now, shrouded in the veil of night,
I'll to the dwellings of the mourners go— 755
My wretched parents—the afflicted Thirza—
Once more I'll visit all—once more I'll bless them—
Bless them! Ah me! the angry winds wou'd waft
Th' intended benediction from my lips—
Curs'd as I am, I cannot—cannot bless them; 760
Yet I will go—to bless them I will strive—

I'll weep before them—I'll deplore my guilt,
And then—then from their reprimanding eyes
For ever flee—oh! yes, from thee, Mahala—
From my beloved infants, ever flee!" 765

Grief chok'd his speech—in silence he remain'd,
While towards the cottages his step he bent,
Wat'ring with tears the solitary path.

Now by a verdant bow'r he pass'd—a bow'r,
Which Abel's hand beneath the hill had planted. 770
Immediately he call'd to mind, that thus,
On the completion of the grateful task,
His brother had affectionately said—
'For ever flourish, trees—for ever bloom—
Oh! may your branches far and wide extend, 775
That underneath the cool refreshing shade
Succeeding generations may relate,
Here Eve brought forth her first-born, and with tears
Of joy she welcom'd him into the world—
Him, the first comfort of her sad exile. 780
She call'd him Cain—she press'd him to her bosom—
She view'd him with ineffable delight—
She kiss'd repeatedly his infant cheeks,
And said—From God I have a son receiv'd!'

With quicken'd step and with averted face 785
The murderer retreated from the spot.
Cold dews of anguish trickled from his brow;
His trembling limbs cou'd scarce his weight sustain.

Such horrors seize the parricide, who had,
With vile dissimulation, to his sire, 790
Returning faint and hungry from the field,
Presented poison'd viands—such his fears,
When, unawares, he passes by his grave,
Tormented by the rustling of the trees,
And by the perfumes of the wreaths, with which 795
His duteous sisters late the urn entwin'd.

The terrifying bow'r Cain now had pass'd,
And soon the cottages approach'd, on which,
Thro' the thick foliage of th' o'er-arching trees,
The gentle moon a feeble radiance shed, 800

l. 789 to 796.—The introduction of this simile is not only abrupt, but censurable, as it tends to mislead or confuse an ordinary reader, who may naturally enquire—"What parricide? Who is the murdered sire? Who are the duteous sisters?" The poet, however, alludes to modern times; but, though digressions of this nature are allowable in poetry, yet in that, which treats of the *first* murder, and holds up to detestation a *fratricide*, the mention of a similar, or, as it may be deemed, a greater crime, is ill-timed, and by no means calculated to heighten or assist the interest of the poem.

And melancholy silence reign'd around.
He gaz'd with tearful eyes—he wrang his hands,
And long in speechless agony remain'd.
Remorse and anguish tore his heart, while he,
Amid the dreary stillness trembling stood. 805
At length, in accents low, he thus exclaim'd—

"How silent is the voice of sorrow here!
Yet, hark! what sounds are these? Are they not sighs?
Are they not piercing groans of sleepless anguish,
And from these dwellings do they not proceed? 810
Ah! ye once cheerful cottages—behold!
Here stands the shudd'ring wretch—in darkness hid,
And by the tortures of the damn'd pursu'd,
Who made you the abodes of bitter grief—
Who from the habitations, ev'n of those 815
Who gave him life, has banish'd all delight—
All social comfort—all domestic bliss!
Oh! dare I breathe the air, thro' which ascend
The sighs of my afflicted parents—the complaints
Of my unhappy wife and widow'd sister? 820
Ah! do I venture in this place t' appear,
Now sanctified by pious grief—by grief
For my offence? Flee, wretch—flee instantly—

This sacred place profane not by thy presence!
Yes, I will flee—far—far away will flee! 825
But suffer—suffer my despairing eyes
To gaze a moment longer.—Oh! permit
A sinner here a little while to weep—
To raise, in your behalf, his blood-stain'd hands
To Heav'n.—Eternal blessings on you, ye—— 830
Hold, wretch! wilt thou profane those sacred names—
Names, which express the softest—sweetest ties—
The noblest feelings of the human heart?
Oh! that your sorrows with these shades of night
Might leave you, and, uniting with the anguish, 835
Which my perturbed heart already feels,
Accomp'ny me, when on the earth I rove—
The earth, now doubly curs'd on my account!
Oh! that I could exclusively endure
The punishment to my transgression due! 840
Oh! wou'd, ye mourners, that you cou'd forget me—
That my detested image never might
Your memories disturb!—Oh! wou'd you cou'd
Forget me—wou'd I cou'd forget myself!
Tremendous wish of misery extreme!" 845

The trembling Cain, in the dark shade conceal'd,
Thus near the dwellings wept, and wrang his hands;

CAIN, STARTLED BY A FOOTSTEP, CONCEALS HIMSELF.

When lo, advancing slowly thro' the gloom,
He heard a foot—an icy shiv'ring seiz'd
His limbs, like the cold agonies of death— 850
In vain he strove to flee—his strength forsook him,
And 'mong the bushes motionless he sank!

The mournful Thirza, who, on the first night
Of her sad widowhood, no sleep obtain'd,
Had left, in tears, her solitary couch, 855
And to her husband's grave pursu'd her way.
Here, seated on the dewy turf, her hands
She wrang, and to the star-besprinkled heav'ns
Rais'd her fix'd eyes; then, sinking on the earth,
The new-made grave she moisten'd with her tears. 860

"Here," she exclaim'd—"here, all my happiness,
My ev'ry joy and comfort, buried lie!
Here—here, beneath this earth, which drinks my tears!
Alas! is there no solace—no repose
During these melancholy hours for me? 865
Then flow, my tears; you are my sole relief—
Yes, flow—oh! flow, ye tears; for now my heart
No other consolation can experience
Than that of weeping o'er this spot—than that,

Amid the death-like silence which prevails, 870
Of sighing here away the tedious night!
'Tis true, indeed, my husband I have seen
Array'd in heav'nly splendor; but, alas!
I in this life of sorrow am depriv'd
Of his sweet company—his tender care; 875
From me, on earth, he is for ever torn!
Can I from lamentations then refrain?
Ah me! when on my couch I sought repose
Beside the tender pledge of our affection,
My senses by my sorrows were o'erpow'r'd! 880
Refreshing sleep had clos'd my infant's eyes;
Sweet innocent! he in his slumbers smil'd,
Unconscious of the loss he had sustain'd,
And ignorant—ah! ignorant, indeed,
Of the vicissitudes of human life! 885
Oh! my sweet boy, thou hast no father now

l. 372—3.—Alluding to the vision which she had seen, *l.* 493—502. Our poet has introduced this incident with the view of reconciling Thirza to the interment of her husband's body; but the time allowed for this vision is too short. Cain's infant sons make their appearance, *l.* 444—6; they see Thirza weeping over Abel's body, *l.* 455—6; and while they are "prattling forth their artless sorrow," Thirza falls into a trance. The time allowed for this dream is only from *l.* 459 to 483. It would have been more natural had the mournful Thirza been comforted by this holy vision on the first night of her widowhood, *l.* 353, &c.

l. 386, &c.—It would have been much better, had Thirza uttered these words, when weeping over the remains of her husband, *l.* 345 to 388. See note on lines 445, &c.

To guide thy steps, and to instruct thy youth;
I shall want strength and wisdom for the task!
Ah! what but restless anguish—keen distress
Before me lie!——How can I find repose 890
On my now solitary nuptial couch,
Where in my husband's arms I us'd to find
The kindest, tenderest, and sweetest, rest?
From me, alas! these are for ever torn—
And by a brother's hand!—Oh misery! 895
Where is the fratricide?—Where is the wretch?
Oh! whither by a guilty conscience driv'n?
Thou God of Mercy, my petitions hear—
Oh! hear my ardent—my unwearied pray'rs,
When they in his behalf to thee ascend! 900
And, God of Grace, reject not his repentance,
When, humbled in the dust, his crime he mourns,
And thy forgiveness supplicates with tears."

This said, the strong emotions of her grief
Denied her utterance awhile; at length, 905
To Heav'n her eyes she rais'd, and thus continued—

"How oft, thou placid moon, how oft wast thou
The silent witness of our chaste endearments,
When in thy silv'ry twilight, arm in arm,

Alone we wander'd, while his honey'd lips 910
Prov'd all the precepts—all the charms of virtue!
Here, in this dust, his mould'ring body lies—
Thy melancholy beam his grave illumes—
Here lies his father's hope—his mother's joy!
Here lies my love—my husband—my dear Abel!" 915

She ceas'd, and long in silent grief absorb'd,
Her tearful eyes round the still landscape cast,
Where she and Abel had together stray'd.

"On yonder bow'r how beautifully gleams
The moon-light," she exclaim'd—"On yonder bow'r,
Now solitary since my Abel's gone! 921
Ah me! what cheering thoughts within me rise,
Which penetrate the gloom of my affliction—
Bright as thy beams, O moon, thy gentle beams,
Now piercing thro' the darkness of the night! 925
How gleams the bow'r, where my departed Abel,
Amid the twilight of the ruddy ev'ning,
So often press'd me to his bosom—Ah!
The recollection of his love—his virtue—
Has kindled in my heart a sacred flame! 930
Yes, I will rise superior to this grief!
Oh! my beloved, there, in yonder bow'r,

Thou hast embrac'd thy Thirza, and, while tears
Of love and piety thy cheeks bedew'd,
'What happiness,' thou'st said—'what happiness 935
To follow virtue's paths—oh! what delight
To love and to adore that God, from whom
These wonders—all these beauties emanate!
Oh! what delight, when conscious that our ways
By the surrounding angels are approv'd! 940
Where is the satisfaction—where the joy
In this creation, tho' with charms replete,
That's equal to the pleasures of the mind,
When of th' Almighty's presence we're assur'd—
That's equal to the consciousness of virtue, 945
Which calls forth tears of transport from the eyes?
To him, who ne'er from rectitude departs,
But in the ways of godliness delights,
Can death be terrible in any form?
We know——Oh! let the sinner then exult 950
In the ineffable—the wondrous grace

l. 935—49.—That virtue alone is the source of happiness is a sentiment thus expressed by the poet, Rowe:

——"To be good is to be happy—angels
Are happier than mankind, because they're better.
Guilt is the source of sorrow; 'tis the fiend,
Th' avenging fiend that follows us behind
With whips and stings—The blest know none of this,
But rest in everlasting peace of mind,
And find the height of all their heav'n is Goodness."

Of God—we know, that when th' immortal soul
Is parted from her covering of dust,
To everlasting glory she'll ascend!'
Thou saidst, and to thy faithful bosom then 955
More ardently didst press me.—'If I quit
This perishable dust—if I attain
Before thee everlasting happiness,
O weep not o'er my mould'ring relics long—
Thy sorrows moderate—thy tears restrain; 960
For what—ah! what's the period of existence,
Allotted thee by the Almighty here,
Compar'd to that eternity, in which
Together endless bliss we shall enjoy!'
Then, clasping thee more closely to my heart, 965
While tears my cheeks descended, I replied—
'And, my beloved, if from this frail dust
I by death's messenger am summon'd first,
Give thou not way to unavailing grief,
Nor o'er my lifeless body long bewail, 970
For we shall meet—beyond the grave shall meet
In regions of superlative delight!
Yes, we shall meet, never again to part,
And be partakers of eternal joy!'

l. 955.—"Thou saidst," &c. Thirza is still addressing her deceased husband, as before, 932—4, and from *l.* 935 to 954 is a quotation from Abel's speeches to her, which quotation she continues, *l.* 956 to 964.

Be comforted, my soul—sink not beneath 975
The weight of thy affliction!—Oh! be cheer'd
By consolations so sublime.——Remember
Thy immortality—thy dignity;
And, looking far beyond thy present grief,
Rejoice in that salvation which awaits thee— 980
In that felicity, which soon will chase
The gloomy checker'd scenes of mortal life!
Ah! if, indeed, the soul were to decay,
When into dust the body sinks—oh! whence
Cou'd I alleviating hope derive? 985
Then o'er this grave I in despair might mourn,
And for annihilation God implore;
But, no—our spirits shall for ever live!
I will not then beneath a weight of grief
Ignobly sink.—To thee, departed saint. 990
Additional delight it may afford,
To see, that still thy precepts I retain,
And am by them with fortitude inspir'd!
Ye tutelary angels, who, unseen,
Around me hover, ye shall witness too 995
My efforts to subdue this fruitless sorrow!—
Yet still—still I must weep—flow on, ye tears,

l. 997—1004.—Thirza had previously resolved on subduing this fruitless sorrow; yet again her tears copiously flow, and she is determined on

A tribute to the mould'ring dust of him,
Who to eternal happiness and glory
Is gone before me!—O'er thy grave, dear saint, 1000
Alas! more copiously my tears now flow—
I o'er thy grave a cypress bow'r will raise,
And there, beneath its melancholy shade,
The tears due to thy memory indulge—
There will I pass my meditative hours, 1005
Contemplating with holy joy the time,
When, free from sin and sorrow, we shall meet
To part no more—when, in eternal bliss,
For ever re-united we shall be!
Oh! blessed prospect, which abates my sorrow!" 1010

Now rose she from the grave, and paus'd awhile—

"My soul had found relief; but—horrid thought—
His brother murder'd him—Cain murder'd Abel!"

Again she knelt, and thus devoutly pray'd—

raising a cypress bower over her husband's grave, and indulging her grief. However contradictory this may seem, it is a just picture of human nature. Where is the faithful, the sincere wife, who, suddenly deprived of the partner of her days, will not erect a monument to his memory, and, however resigned to her fate, will not now and then shed a tear over his urn?

"Almighty God! my supplications hear— 1015
Oh! let the wretched sinner mercy find—
Destroy him not, O God, in thy displeasure—
Accept his pray'rs—preserve him from destruction!
These, my petitions, shall to Thee ascend
With fervor, when, amid the twilight grey, 1020
The star of ev'ning glows—with fervor, when
The ruddy dawn the rising sun proclaims!
Oh! yes, for him incessantly I'll pray,
For, tho' a sinner, he my brother is!"

Still trembling in the thicket Cain remain'd, 1025
The prey of agonizing wild despair.

"Oh! I will flee," he to himself exclaim'd,
"Begone, vile wretch—hence from this sacred spot—
Alas! I here am fix'd—I cannot flee—

l. 1027, &c.—These exclamations of Cain, we must suppose, were uttered during the lamentations of Thirza: they are judiciously given in broken sentences, as if abruptly spoken at intervals: while hiding in the thicket he overhears his sister, and, it seems, knows her voice. He utters the lines 1027 to 1037, while Thirza is lamenting in lines 861 to 893.—"Hark, how she mourns," *l.* 1038, may refer to lines 912 to 915. The line 1040 alludes to the time of Thirza's silence, *l.* 916—18. The lines 1041—9 are exclamations excited by her piety and fortitude, *l.* 919 to 1010. And *l.* 1050—1064 most refer to Thirza's second prayer, *l.* 1015 to 1024; because as she soon after retires, *l.* 1065, it is to be supposed he did not overhear her first prayer, *l.* 898 to 903.

Oh! crowd not round me, ye infernal fiends— 1030
Let me escape—Ah! suffer me to flee—
Yes, suffer me to leave this sacred spot!
Oh no! wretch that I am—I cannot flee—
My strength forsakes me—ev'ry limb now shakes—
I feel a chilly dampness——Oh! that these— 1035
That these were the last agonies of nature—
But no—I live t'endure encreasing anguish!

"Hark! how she mourns, and yet—I cannot flee—
Her groans—her lamentations pierce my soul!
They cease—and now—now she appears compos'd—

"O virtue, virtue, how sublime thy hopes— 1041
Thy consolations, which are lost to me!
Alas! I have no hope—oh! not the least,
For I have sinn'd—beyond forgiveness sinn'd.
I've forfeited all hope, and now—oh! now 1045
The full extent of wretchedness I feel—
Yes, torments, new and nameless, I endure—
Not Hell itself, in its most deep abyss,
Can boast of torments more severe than mine! 1049

"She prays!—Alas!—for me—for me she prays!
Dost thou not hate me, then?—Dost thou not curse

The fratricide—thy husband's murderer?
Oh! unexampled goodness! now, indeed,
I feel the bright display of excellence!
Her piety—her virtue overcome me! 1055
My guilt more horrible appears—oh! yes,
As black—as gloomy, as the caverns deep,
Which lead to Hell!—All the infernal pangs,
Which the apostate spirits undergo—
The aggravated horrors of remorse, 1060
Of guilt, of punishment, now rend my heart!
And dost thou, Thirza—dost thou pray for me?
Alas! thy supplications are in vain—
Th' Almighty will not hear them—he is just!

"See—from her husband's grave she now retires—
The grave of him, who by a brother's hand 1066
Was thither sent—oh! sinner that I am!
May I to walk on the same path presume—
Oh! may I on her footsteps dare to shed
Tears of ineffable—heart-breaking anguish! 1070
Lo! there's his grave—yon hillock is his grave,
Which in the moonlight strikes the view—Begone!
Flee, murderer, and leave this sacred spot!"

He shudder'd, and with hasty step retreated—

He fled——but suddenly again stood still— 1075
Again he wept—again his hands he wrang,
And, in the accents of despair, exclaim'd—

"I cannot—cannot flee—how cou'd I leave—
For ever leave my wife and infant sons!
How cou'd I leave thee, my belov'd Mahala, 1080
Without deploring humbly in the dust—
Deploring at thy feet my hateful crime?
Tears of compassion thou, perhaps, may'st shed—
Perhaps, may'st bless me—Bless me!—how can I,
Accurs'd by God, thy benediction seek? 1085
Oh! thou must hate—must execrate a wretch,
Whose crime deserves it—then—then I will flee,
When loaded with all nature's curse and thine—
For ever flee—oh! misery extreme!
Infernal horror!——No! I cannot leave you— 1090
I come, beloved wife, beloved children!
To mourn before you in the dust my crime—
I come, Mahala, at thy feet to weep—

l. 1078—97.—Cain's agitation of mind is here strongly delineated. He cannot flee without seeing his wife and children. His beloved Mahala, he thinks, may bless him, which would be some consolation; yet again he thinks his crime is so great, that she must execrate him. He is then resolved to flee, and yet he cannot. He must seek her forgiveness before his departure; yet he is afraid to enter his habitation.—These hesitations beautifully describe the perturbation of his mind.

To seek forgiveness for the poignant grief—
The wretchedness, which I have brought upon thee!
Then I will leave you—oh! for ever leave you, 1096
My dear Mahala, my dear infant sons!"

Cain at a distance from the grave retir'd,
And towards his cottage slowly bent his steps;
But oft, as if irresolute, he stopp'd, 1100
Ere he his habitation reach'd.—Without,
White as a corse, and trembling, long he stood—
At length, with timid step, the threshold pass'd.

Mahala, on her solitary couch,
Now sat lamenting by the moon's pale light, 1105
Herself pale as the moon, when veil'd in clouds;
And while with tearful eyes she thus bewail'd,
Her little innocents around her sobb'd.
When Cain she saw, a piercing shriek she gave,
And senseless on the bed she sank—alarm'd 1110
The children ran, and grasp'd their father's knees.

"Oh! father, we rejoice at thy return—
Ah! comfort our poor mother—she is faint;

l. 1103.—In this early age, we are not to suppose that there were locks or bars; therefore, the critic who censures Cain's passing the threshold without gaining admittance is more fastidious than wise.

For great affliction has befall'n us all!
Dear Abel's dead, and cover'd with the earth! 1115
What has detain'd thee, father, till this hour?
Oh! how we wish'd for thee—speak to our mother."

Thus spoke alternately the weeping boys,
Who round the agitated Cain still clung—
He kiss'd—embrac'd them, but no answer made: 1120
And while between them, shuddering he stood,
His tears in copious streams flow'd on their heads—
With anguish inexpressible o'ercome,
He could not speak; but, falling on the earth,
Now prostrate at Mahala's feet he lay. 1125
The boys immediately their cries redoubled—
Mahala 'woke,—and at her feet perceiv'd
Her husband moist'ning with his tears the earth.

"Cain, Cain!" distractedly she cry'd—"O Cain!"
While bitterly she wept, and tore her hair! 1130

"Mahala! dear Mahala!" he replied,
With falt'ring voice—"forgive—forgive me, if—
Wretch as I am, stain'd with a brother's blood—
Once more before thee I presume to weep,
Once more myself to humble in the dust 1135

Here at thy feet!—Oh! suffer me this last—
This only consolation—only hope—
My misery unparallel'd can know!
Oh! my beloved, execrate me not!
Permit me my contrition to express: 1140
Then I will flee—accurs'd by God and man,
By endless torments—by remorse pursu'd—
To regions uninhabited will flee—
A wretched fugitive—Oh! then, dear wife,
Spare thy reproaches—execrate me not!" 1145

Now, in a tone of the acutest grief,
Mahala said—" Oh! wretched, wretched Cain!
What hast thou done? The best of brothers kill'd!
A murderer!—but, oh! my husband still!"

Cain, with a look of tenderness—a look, 1150
Expressive of the bitter agony,
Which rent his heart, in plaintive accents cried—

" Oh! fatal hour! when by a dream from hell

l. 1153—8.—Cain now sees the fallacy of his dream, in Canto IV. *l.* 86 to 228, by which he was stimulated to kill the best of brothers, in order to rescue his children from imaginary bondage. The consequent anguish, which lacerates his heart, and embitters the lives of his dearest rela-

I was deceiv'd—when fancy represented
These, my dear weeping innocents, as slaves 1155
Of Abel's race—then, mad with the idea,
To rescue them from visionary bondage,
I slew—oh! fatal hour!—the best of brothers!
But now, infernal torments I endure—
The horrid deed for ever will pursue me, 1160
And I eternal punishment shall feel!—
Forget me, my beloved—oh! forget
Thy wretched husband!—Execrate me not!
Accurs'd by God and man I now will flee—
For ever thee and my dear children leave! 1165
Then curse me not—oh! thy reproaches spare—
I flee from thee—my sons—and all mankind!"

Around him shriek'd the children—in despair
Their little hands above their curly heads
They rais'd, while on the earth their mother sank, 1170
Reclining on the sore-afflicted Cain.

"Receive," said she, while bitterly she wept,
"Receive these tears—these tokens of compassion—
These testimonies of sincere forgiveness!

tions, confirms his opinion that it was a dream from Hell; and the conviction of having been thus the dupe of an evil spirit tends to encrease his misery.

Thou, Cain, wou'dst flee—wou'dst wander too alone,
Amid the solitude of desert regions— 1176
But think'st thou in this hut I cou'd remain,
While thou a wretched—houseless fugitive,
Far distant art, and languishing, perhaps,
Without assistance in a barren wild? 1180
No! Cain—I will accompany thy wand'rings!
How cou'd I suffer thee, my still belov'd,
To wander in the dreary wilderness,
Forlorn and destitute of all relief?

l. 1175—90.—Mahala's resolution of accompanying her husband's wanderings is an admirable test of sincere affection. Our poet has also made Thirza an amiable wife; but, though great as her affliction was for the death of her husband, it must be allowed that Mahala's conjugal love was put to a severer trial: her sorrow for the loss of Abel was as great as her sister's; she bathed the bloody body with her tears, *l.* 220; and while Thirza remained motionless and silent, she wept, and vented her anguish in the most plaintive manner, *l.* 248—86. When told that her husband was the murderer of Abel, she was thrilled with silent horror, *l.* 307. Her detestation of the crime and of the offender was equal to her sister's, *l.* 312—7; yet, notwithstanding the excess of her grief, and the violence of her passion, she checks her sister, and prevents her from cursing Cain, by this prudent remark——

Thy brother he—alas! my husband too!——*l.* 327.

Impressed with this consideration, *l.* 1149, she is resolved on accompanying the wretched sinner, and, in the above pathetic address to her husband, evinces the utmost love and tenderness. Her being the mother of four children adds to her heroism as a wife, *l.* 1245—51, and the poet, as a reward for her constancy, gives her the applause and encouragement of an invisible angel, *l.* 1264—70. We must suppose, that Cain took a wife with him to the land of Nod; but, in all probability, her disposition was similar to his. See note on *l.* 1274—5.

Oh! what inquietudes would then torment me! 1185
Each melancholy sound—each little breeze
That struck my ear, wou'd terrify my soul.
'Perhaps ev'n now,' I to myself shou'd say—
'Perhaps, ev'n now, he, helpless and forlorn,
Is groaning in the agonies of death!" 1190

She said—with mingled transport and surprise
Her husband, gazing on her, now exclaim'd—

"Oh Heav'n!—what do I hear?—Ah! can it be?
Or am I by a dream again deceiv'd?
It is Mahala!—it is no delusion— 1195
What cheering words!—but, oh! it must not be!
No, my beloved wife, it is enough
Thou dost not hate—thou dost not curse thy husband!
This consolation softens my despair!
But, O my dear Mahala, 'tis not fit, 1200
That thou with me the punishment shou'dst share,
Which to my horrid crime alone is due!
No, virtuous woman, in this hut remain—
Among the dwellings of the righteous stay,
On which the blessing of th' Almighty rests— 1205
Thou shalt not share my misery—my pain!
Forget the wretch, abandon'd by his God—

The wretch, who is denied a place of rest!
Forget thy husband; but, ah! curse him not!
And may encreasing happiness attend thee!" 1210

"No, Cain," Mahala said, "It shall not be—
If wretched thou, can I be happy here?
With thee I'll flee, and all thy sorrow share—
Yes, with our children, I with thee will wander
To solitude, and be with thee forlorn! 1215
Of all thy misery I will partake,
And to assuage it, peradventure, help—
My tears of soft compassion shall with those
Of thy contrition mingle, and my pray'rs
With thine to the Almighty's throne ascend! 1220
These, our dear children, shall around us kneel,
And lisp forth supplications for their father.
God the repentance of a sinner hears.
Oh then, my husband, I with thee will flee—
We will unceasingly together mourn, 1225
And fervently implore th' Almighty's grace,
Till he vouchsafe a beam thereof to shed,
To cheer and comfort thy despairing soul!—
Hope then in God;—for be assur'd, dear Cain,
The pray'r of true repentance he accepts!" 1230

"Oh! thou—what shall I call thee?" Cain replied,
"Angel of cheer!—for consolation sweet
Already penetrates my darken'd soul!
Come to my arms, affectionate Mahala,
For to embrace thee I may venture now! 1235
Oh! that the soft emotions of my heart
I cou'd express; but no—not all my tears—
All my embraces, can my feelings speak!"

This said, Cain to Mahala bow'd his head;
He cou'd not—cou'd not utter the sensations— 1240
The gratitude, which fill'd his throbbing heart.
Now, leaving her, his children he embrac'd;
And then, returning to his tender wife,
Again with ardor press'd her to his bosom.

This tender mother—this heroic wife, 1245
Her youngest infant to her bosom took,
And on her husband fondly now reclin'd.
Another child held by his father's hand,
While their two sons, Eliel and Josiah,
Who from their faces wip'd away the tears, 1250

l. 1245—8.—These two infants, which were never before mentioned, are evidently introduced by our poet to render Mahala more a heroine. See note on *l.* 445.

Tripp'd gaily on before. Their hut they left.
With tearful eyes Mahala look'd around:—

"Oh! bless'd be ye, whom I now leave behind,"
She cried—"For ever—ever be ye bless'd!
Soon from our future dwelling I'll return, 1255
To supplicate a blessing for myself—
And, for my contrite husband—your forgiveness."

Now on the cottages her eyes she fix'd,
And, pausing, wept as if irresolute—
When balmy odours, than the sweets of spring 1260
More fragrant, on a sudden fill'd the air,
And, o'er their heads, issu'd these heav'nly sounds
From some celestial messenger unseen—

"Go, gen'rous wife—yes, with thy husband go!
And, in a comfortable dream, to Eve 1265
Thy noble resolution I'll reveal—
Thy mother in a vision shall be told,
With a repentant husband thou art gone—
With him to pray, and of th' Almighty Judge
Forgiveness for a sinner to implore!" 1270

Now, by the moonlight, they their way pursu'd,
But often to look back and weep delay'd—

At length, they of the cottages lost sight,
And solitary regions enter'd, where
The print of human foot had never been! 1275

l. 1274—5.—Cain had previously resolved on fleeing to some solitary region, as we find in a former part of this Canto:

——————— I will flee
* * * * * * *
To some wild region, where no human footstep
Was ever on the mould'ring grass imprinted.——*l.* 698, 700—1.

And again—

In gloomy solitude my days I'll pass.——*l.* 714.

The Bible informs us, that Cain fled to the land of Nod, on the east of Eden, Gen. iv. 16; and the name of this place has occasioned as many conjectures among the commentators on the Sacred Scriptures, as the mark which had been fixed on Cain, and which are equally as futile and ridiculous. *See note on lines 736, &c. in Canto IV.* Some imagine this land was so called from the *shaking* of the earth, when visited by Cain: others, from men *nodding* their heads at the delinquent, and saying, "there goes the murderer of his brother." Though we find a poetical allusion to this latter supposition in Canto IV. *l.* 730—41; yet Gessner, it is evident, did not entertain this fallacious opinion, as he expressly points out, that the place of Cain's retirement had never before been visited by man. Where then were the people who derided Cain? We do not read, that Adam had any other vagrant sons, and we cannot suppose, that the fratricide's *own* children nodded their heads at him. Cain, indeed, was apprehensive of being slain (Gen. v. 14. Canto IV. *l.* 732—3); but these fears could only have seized him, while he remained in the same country with his relatives, or he might have been in dread of being hereafter met or pursued by them. It is probable that Cain gave the place of his refuge the name of Nod from his having wandered about, *wandering* being the definition of the word *Nod;* and that this land was afterwards peopled by Cain's descendents.

FINIS.

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